

The Thai Occult

by
Jenx

Translations by Bon

For anyone wishing to visit Thailand to meet the Ajarns in this book,
please contact the author through the website
www.thethaioccult.com



1. Ajarn Verataep in his Samnak in Bangkok.

Glossary

Ajarn - A lay practitioner of the Occult arts.
Akhara - The letters of the scripts used in the regional Occult practices.
Animism - The belief in the supernatural power of nature.
Arahant - A Buddhist saint.
Athan - Supernatural in nature. **Chin Athan** - a piece of something supernatural.
Ban Sakul Pen - A ritual to construct a spirit.
Ban Sakul Tai - A ritual to help a spirit pass on.
Barang - An object that contains a supernatural being.
Boon - A gift or action to gain merit.
Boraan - Ancient.
Brahmin - The priestly class from the Indian traditions.
Bucha - To praise, to worship.
Charnel Grounds - A cemetery or a place where bodies were left to decompose.
Chok Laap - The attribute to attract wealth.
Dek Wat - A young helper at a Temple.
Dharma - The teachings of The Buddha.
Esaan - The region of North East Thailand.
Fang Khem Thong - A gold needle.
Farang - The Thai term for a foreigner.
Hoon Payon - A protective Animist spirit.
Horasart - The science of Thai Astrology.
Kata - A chant, prayer or spell, from the Sanskrit word Gatha.
Khan Kru - A construction that marks the level of Wicha attained under a Master.
Khmer - The name of the language, and the ancestors of present-day Cambodia.
Khom - One of the scripts of The Thai Occult, which originated in Cambodia.
Khong Khun - The act of possession.
Khun - The polite way to address a Thai Person, followed by their name.
Klaew Klaat - The attribute to bestow the avoidance of danger.
Kom - A type of spell to control a person, often with the help of a ghost.
Kong Grapan - The attribute of invincibility.
Lanna - A language and the ancient kingdom of Northern Thailand.
Leklai - A legendary substance that bestows invincibility and other protective traits.
Lersi/Ruesi - A hermit sage and conduit to the gods.
Luksit - A student of an Ajarn or monk.
Mae - The Thai for Mother, but also applied to the names of spirits and deities.
Mae Chee - A Buddhist Nun.
Maha - A suffix meaning greatness.
Maha Amnat - The attribute that bestows authority.
Maha Niyom - The attribute that bestows popularity.
Maha Saneah - The attribute of attraction or great charm.
Mantra - Kata - A rhythmic chant of empowerment.
Metta - The attribute of loving kindness and compassion for the self and others.
Mhor Phi - The original shaman or spirit doctors of Thailand.
Miit Mhor - A ritual knife.
Mon - One of the people's of Burma, their script and language.

Muan Sarn - A mixture of sacred ingredients.

Naen - A young monk.

Nam Man Prai - An oil extracted from a corpse.

Namo Dtassa - A famous chant to the Buddha.

Opatika - A person's Guardian Spirit.

Pali - The original language of the Buddhist scriptures.

Panneng - An occult talisman made from a part of the human skull.

Pha Yant - A cloth with applied Yantra.

Phi - The Thai name for a ghost (pronounced 'Pee')

Prai - Materials from a corpse or items containing the essence of the dead.

Precepts - The rules of abstinence followed by Buddhists.

Pruk Saek - A blessing or activation of a talisman meaning 'to blow life'.

Puttakun or Puttasart - The Wicha of pure Buddhist or 'white magic'.

Roop Pan - A wood statue.

Roop Lor - A metal statue.

Sai Sin - A blessed thread that may come from Buddhist rituals or the ceremonies for the dead.

Saiyasart - The science of influencing life through supernatural forces.

Sak Yant - The magical tattoos of Thailand.

Samathi - An intense state of focus.

Samnak - The workplace of an Ajarn.

Sangha - The Buddhist organisation of Thailand.

Sanskrit - The liturgical language of Hinduism.

Serm Baramee - The attribute of raising the person's prestige.

Serm Duang - The attribute to realign the fate to be of more benefit.

Somdej - Meaning 'his holiness' as well as a style of an amulet.

Sompoi - A seedpod that is soaked in water to bathe with that acts to spiritually cleanse the body.

Sutta - From the word Sutra, meaning a discourse of The Buddha.

Taep - An Angel.

Taewadaa - A type of Angel or guardian spirits.

Takien - Both a type of tree, its wood and the name of the spirit within - Mae Takien.

Takrut - Yantra or a spell on a thin sheet of metal that can be rolled and worn.

Tamboon - The act of giving to gain merit through kindness or donations.

Tamayut - One of the sects of Thai Buddhism, meaning The Order Adhering To The Dharma.

Tripitaka - The Buddhist Scriptures, also known as the Pali Canon.

Tudong - A period of spiritual practice undertaken in nature.

Wahn - Plants, their parts or their extracts that are used for their magical qualities.

Wat - A Thai Temple.

Wai - The Thai gesture with the hands together as a greeting or to offer respect.

Wai Kru - An appointed day to show devotion to an Ajarn and receive his blessings in return.

Wicha - In Pali, Wicha means knowledge gained through study or practice. The Occult practices of the region have Wicha, and the word is also used for the more normal sciences, for example, the Wicha of Mathematics.

Yantra - A mystical diagram of Indian origin.



2. Sompoi, a seed pod that is soaked in water and used as a spiritual bath to cleanse the body of ghosts and negative influences.

Introduction

As my mum always says, 'We don't know where we got you from'.

It had never crossed my mind to write a book, any book, let alone a series of works on The Thai Occult, but you never know what will happen in life. The first Thai Occult book with the red cover is difficult for me to read now as it's too rough, but the enthusiasm about the subject was both catching and compelling. What's there not to love about a magical system that uses spirit familiars to influence the thoughts of other people, baby ghosts that can kill, and love magic that involves getting people to ingest the oils from a corpse? Rituals that use a photograph and date of birth to either harm, influence or bring good fortune, knowledge to fill an encyclopaedia on the herbal lore, and the use of human materials as long as they come from people who died terrible deaths. And what about a demon/deity that encourages you to fuck anything that moves and a doll that acts as a bodyguard? It is THAT that got the first book released, and the fact that I could not understand why no one had released a book on the subject before.

That first book was about looking at the information that was available at that time and putting it together, referencing everything that could be found in print, and opening the door to a closer look at this ancient style of magic. After spending many years in Thailand, I knew that if a book on The Thai Occult was produced, the Ajarns would want to tell their story in the second volume, The Thai Occult Sak Yant. That book set the style for this one and the interviews are excellent, but with that volume came difficulties and crazy people. It was a weird test in many ways, something that had to happen to force me to get my shit together, and as Ajarn Sala Boon Khong commented at the time, 'Your next book will be amazing'.

What you hold is 'the next book', which is the culmination of a journey that was laid out before me, and all that was necessary was to follow the path while enjoying the view.

Quite a few times in my life I have been given an opportunity to work on something that was meant to be done; like a door opening, and the only action needed was to step through it. The first two books in this series showed that I could make things happen, but with this one, the path was laid out, and my skills were there to show the world of The Thai Occult in the correct manner. With being an older man who has spent a long time in The Land Of Smiles, and having produced two books already, the Ajarns put their trust in me to do the best job possible with this work. That is quite a responsibility, so this had to be something good because who would want to upset powerful magicians?

My partner, Bon, was critical in producing this book, in detailing precisely what the Ajarn in question had said using the best translation possible,

which is tricky in the Thai language. It almost drove him crazy, but that is a small part of the burden of being my partner. Love you, Bon.

The Ajarns interviewed in this book have been incredible, giving freely of their time, and once they understood how I wanted to pitch this work, they knew what information to give. A few of the rituals witnessed through the course of constructing this work will stay with me till the day I die, and depending on how I die, I may end up in an amulet or two. It's OK, I don't mind, and Ajarn Ting can cremate me when I pass too; such is my respect for the Ajarns interviewed here. What is astonishing to me is that the Ajarns do not know how special they are as they are a part of their Lanna culture, but that may change as outsiders can now read their words as well as visit them. A few of them have said that it is now my job to help the world understand them and I consider that role a privilege.

This book has involved my moving home from Bangkok to Chiang Mai to finish it, such were the complexities encountered. There is a community of astonishing magicians in this region, and the knowledge that they hold is breathtaking. Groups of magicians are not common, but what is incredible is that while they are all Lanna Ajarns, they all have their own ways and methods of creating magic. A few of them have the area they live in as part of their title, like Ajarn Ting of Doi Lor and Ajarn Suea of Ban Fon as a mark of their importance. Many of them were monks for many years, and most have had numerous Masters from systems as varied as Karen magic and the Burmese cults. The depth of occult knowledge is mind-blowing, and this is an introduction to their art.

My aim for this book is that it opens this regions' magic to the outside world, ensures its survival, and that some of the Thai and Lanna techniques are used to refresh other forms of magic. The world needs magic, and the world needs the people who have the intelligence and dedication required to become a magician. This book is dedicated to the collection of studious, spiritual men that have given their time to try to help the reader understand who they are, and the magic they perform. Find a comfortable chair, fluff the cushions and get ready for the journey contained within. You may have to read this numerous times to ensure that it is absorbed correctly.

The Ajarns expect it of you.

With love,

Jenx

To visit the Ajarns in this book for any of the rituals or Sak Yant contained here, please contact the author at **www.thethaioccult.com**

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3. A spirit house for a highly unusual tree in central Bangkok.

A Funny Kind of Buddhism

From the conversations with Buddhists, and in particular, the more strident Western followers, that have arisen since starting the process of gaining an understanding of the occult practices in Thailand, the most common response to many of the beliefs in Thailand is 'That's not Buddhism!'. While this response is often a little hysterical or defensive, it is factually correct. During His pursuit of enlightenment the Buddha rejected magical practices, but only after He had explored the magical world with the help of a Lersi. In the end, the Buddha considered magic as a distraction to the aim of His philosophy, which has led to antagonism between Buddhism and the practices of The Thai Occult. The fact that magic is still widely practised in the region after the influence of Buddhism for a couple of thousand years is remarkable, but the conflict between the practices negates the history of the area, the needs of the people and the realities of life itself.

Although religions, practices and philosophies have numerous functions, they all act as a refuge or way to help their devotees cope with the periodic suffering that comes with life. They do this by explaining the suffering, and then attempt to provide techniques by which the suffering is avoided, or its burden diminished. While Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country, there are older systems here that offer alternative, logically incompatible explanations for the same phenomena, and the people may hold both to be true. Where Buddhism is practised it is often accompanied by some other spiritual system, and one reason for it flourishing in Asia is due to the philosophy easily accommodating the native beliefs of the cultures it came into contact with ¹. In Thailand, this second system is a folk religion, which presumes the existence of beings that are supernatural in nature as well as the practice of magic. Generally termed as Animist, the system has become hopelessly intertwined with a Buddhism that can be viewed either as a veneer to the older traditions, or the Animist system can be seen as surviving in the presence of the organised religion.

While the Thais hold tradition and culture as an essential aspect of their society, it seems insufficient as a single idea to explain the survival of many ancient Animist practices. The reason for this may lie within in the structure of the method of Buddhism itself, or is allied to the frailties of the human race, something which Buddhism is trying to rectify. Looking at the Buddhist treatment of suffering, it is important to distinguish its explanation for the origin of suffering from the reason for its cause. For Buddhism, the source of suffering is rooted in desire, but since desire is an attribute of all sentient beings, it follows that suffering can only be eliminated by the transcendence of sentient existence, i.e., by the attainment of enlightenment. The problem is that the origin of suffering does not fully explain the cause of personal suffering through illness, bad luck, the death of a child, oppressive poverty and so on; all attributed by Buddhism to the inexorable working out of one's karma, which consists of the consequences of the good and evil deeds

committed in all previous existences. The person cannot escape or even alleviate present suffering. The only hope is to preclude future suffering through eliminating those desires which produce the sins, which creates the karma, which produces the suffering. 2

However satisfying the doctrine of Buddhism is, the cause of suffering is less than satisfying emotionally because it places the responsibility of the suffering exclusively onto the person, precluding the possibility of coping with it because there is no escape from one's karma. This aspect is a factor that allows the ancient Animist practices to survive, as these practices can often provide the tools sought during the times when human nature comes to the fore to alleviate the problems associated with daily life. All research undertaken in Buddhist societies has found Animistic beliefs and practices that are often incompatible with the doctrine itself, and this is also the case in Thailand 3. As E.O. James wrote in a 1961 work on comparative religions, 'The thought and practice of civilised peoples cannot be cut off from the underlying customs and beliefs which have played a part in shaping their world, however much subsequent knowledge and ethical evaluation may have modified and transformed earlier cultures.'

The ancient beliefs of this region grew from the idea that the natural world holds magical power, and the people sought to harness that power for their benefit. Human beings have always attempted to maximise pleasure, which often expresses itself as the granting of wishes and fulfilling desires 4. Many animals instilled awe or wonder because of their qualities, be it the power of a Tiger or the way an insect attracted a mate. To a hunter that killed a Tiger, keeping the teeth, fur and claws meant that he could claim the power of the beast he had slain, and be seen to have done so by the members of his society. Certain beetles and insects that either attracted a mate through the sound they made or their beautiful colours attained a relevance within the belief system that could be used to help young people find a partner. There was also an ancient practice of tattooing, which predominantly consisted of the images of animals in the attempt to gain the attributes of those beasts 5. The Shaman of the tribes would have also held the knowledge of how to control spirits and the alchemy of nature, filling the role of both spiritual and natural healers, and it has to be presumed that this is the source for the Thai version of necromancy as there is none within the Theravada system itself. This presumption comes from the fact that the only time an offering of alcohol is made at a Thai altar, it is to the spirits of the dead or an ancient Deva such as Mae Per or Phra Ngang, even though one of the five Buddhist precepts forbids the consumption of alcohol. Only the dead and the ancient ones get a periodic glass of booze as a reward for services rendered, and that practice has survived the introduction of the Buddhist philosophy.

The alchemy of the Thai practices is vast, with many plants, flowers, roots, herbs, seeds, stones, earth's, woods, gems, metals and human materials holding perceived magical power. How much of this knowledge existed



4. A mural about the frailty of life in Wat Umong, Chiang Mai.



5. Ajarn Suea performing the Pruk Saek for empowerment.

before the first wave of religious influence from India to the West with the arrival of the Lersi (or Ruesi) can only be presumed, but it is thought that the Lersi brought the magical texts of the Fourth Veda, and the first use of kata. As with all Shamanic societies, a system must have been already present to provide the magical assistance that people sought, but it became influenced by the newer practices of the Lersi, and what was relevant or worked was absorbed by the magicians of that time. The Lersi must have also adapted their methods to fit with those already being used in the area in an attempt to be accepted in their new home, adding to and developing this region's collective knowledge. For instance, it can be presumed that magical tattoos existed here before the Lersi and that the Lersi then accepted that practice, because the placing an image of a being that holds spiritual power onto the skin was taboo in India, and it still is.

In the modern Thai magical and Buddhist practices, there is the Pruk Saek, which means 'to blow life' or 'blow an awakening', essentially adding 'magic' into an object. It is unknown whether this action started with the influx of the Brahmanism of the Lersi or with the later Theravada Buddhism as it is not linked to any specific religion. It may have started with the ancient Shaman of the Tai Yai tribes, meaning that there could have been a similar action present before the influence of the later practices. Some sort of activation that constituted a blessing would have almost certainly existed before the arrival of the Pruk Saek, be it through tribal dances, rituals or the Shaman himself 6.

The modern Pruk Saek is firmly rooted in Buddhism, but it is at odds with a Theravada style in which the practice and belief in magic is taboo. Pali is the original language of the Theravada Buddhist system, and the word Wicha translates as correct knowledge. Awicha is incorrect knowledge, and magic falls squarely into the latter category in that it does not follow actual Buddhist principles, although it seems that the people of Thailand choose not to listen at this point. Although the Buddha admitted that a person could attain supernatural abilities through certain intense meditational practices, He decreed that it was not to be performed for entertainment, or used for monetary gain and the modern magical methods come from the mixing of the ancient traditions and beliefs present before Buddhism arrived. Many Thai monks have become famous because of their magical abilities, an indication of how sincerely the belief in the practice of magic is held by the people, as well as the presumption that it can be of benefit in life.

It can be quite tricky to construct a question regarding some of the practices in Thailand, but in a recent conversation with Ajarn Apichai of Chiang Mai, an indication was given by this talented young magical practitioner as to how effective the Pruk Saek can be. On separating two amulets and placing one in front of each of us the question could be formulated that if we had both made the same amulet in the same way, but only Ajarn performed the Pruk Saek, what would the difference in magical power be?

The ingredients themselves hold a great deal of magical power because the Prai has been sourced from a supernaturally powerful corpse, and the plants have been grown using the correct methods, but my Pruk Saek will double the power of this amulet.

Ajarn Apichai, July, 2017.

This is the importance of the Pruk Saek stated in very simple terms.

While the Buddhist philosophy has had a profound influence on the magic in Thailand, complementing the Buddhist practices are beliefs and rituals that assume the existence of several types of spirits whose behaviour is considered to affect human welfare. There is an outwardly organised state religion with strict rules, but the people of Thailand will use pretty much any spiritual practice available to aid them through the difficulties of life, and perceive it as being okay to do so. A farmer who calls himself a Buddhist often has no problem with performing rites that are Animist or Shamanistic. They will attempt to appease the spirits around them, ask the advice of fortune-tellers and seek blessings or help from any source that is seen to work, and there is a firm belief in the efficiency of these practices. The Thai methods are more complicated than two religious systems existing side by side as separate practices as there is a syncretism involved, with many people considering that the two are part of a single spiritual path. Buddhism in Thailand is perceived as a long-term goal towards a more enlightened state, a philosophy to follow for a good life, whereas the Animist side is for the problems that arise in daily life. These short-term issues are tackled by using items and practices that are occult based, but almost everything in these arts is undertaken at the same time as seeking the protection of the Buddha himself.

The Shamanic traditions developed in Thailand to deal with troublesome entities such as ghosts and spirits, and those traditions have been accepted by the practice of Buddhism to enable the monks and Ajarns to aid the lay population that seeks their help. Helping people in this way occurs despite the fact that strictly, the Buddhist organisation here decries these matters. In these cases, the beliefs of the people hold sway and the help is seen as an act of Metta (loving-kindness) as it aids others. The views differ between the people in cities and the rural areas due to the variations in lifestyle and experience, further adding to the complexity of the spiritual system. The Buddhism of the Thai villagers, and even of rural monks is often at odds with the official religion in the towns and cities. In practical terms (and the Thais are practical people), the Buddhism that overlays the ancient animist beliefs of this region has evolved to serve the demands and needs of its people, wherever they reside.

The powerful animistic belief system in Thailand involves what is known as *Phi*, spirits or ghosts, either of people or those residing in natural objects. (Phi is pronounced like 'Pee' with a breath out on the P, which is similar when pronouncing the name of the town of Phuket, which is not pronounced 'Fuck it' despite many people's tendency to do so). The Thai spirits are considered powerful enough to bring illness and misfortune, or on the contrary, provide protection, healing and even good luck for those who follow proper ethics and appease them. When first visiting Thailand it was surprising to see Thai people both Wai as they went past a famous Buddhist shrine and then do the same when making offerings to a spirit table, which is essentially an Animist practice. A tree near to the hotel had dresses hung from it, and the first festival witnessed here was dedicated to the waters that enable the bounty and fertility of this land. This was also at a time where even a joke about a ghost being around caused a mild panic, and the fear was palpable, so while being cruel, it was deliciously funny to continue. The spirit world remains a serious business in the Land of Smiles, despite all the outward modernisation.

Spirit worship is probably the oldest form of religion in the world ⁷. The spirits in Thailand are thought to play a part in many different aspects of life, and because they are believed to be mischievous and meddlesome, are appeased with offerings and incantations. Thai spirits are known for their fickleness and unpredictability, which is due in part to a lack of hierarchy within their ranks although luckily, they are also considered as easily bribed as the police and politicians. This has led to the practice of seeking luck and help from any source available, which may seem surprising to those living outside Asia. There is no contradiction in Thailand between following Buddhism, and then popping to the shrine of a famous ghost and asking for help with getting a good exam result. If the results are good, an offering in thanks is given, and the fame of the shrine grows because of the success of the request.

1. Kamala Tiyanich - *Forest Recollections* - 1997 p3
2. Melford E Spiro - *Burmese Supernaturalism* - 1978 p4
3. Melford E Spiro - *Burmese Supernaturalism* - 1978 p3
4. Melford E Spiro - *Burmese Supernaturalism* - 1978 p xxvii
5. Ajarn Metta interview - *The Thai Occult Sak Yant* - 2017 p12
6. Ajarn Metta interview - *The Thai Occult Sak Yant* - 2017 p15
7. Mircea Eliade - *The Sacred and The Profane*

For a better understanding of the occult system in Thailand, it is important to separate the spirits from the *Phi* (ghosts) to understand the differences between them, although the Thais tend to group them as one.

Thai Spirits

The most important of the spirits in Thailand is the *Chao Thi*, or guardian spirit of the house compound that is restricted to the land on which the dwelling resides. Fixed on a post in the compound of most houses in the central region is a small spirit house that the spirit is encouraged to occupy to keep it satisfied and stop it from hopefully, being unruly and adversely affecting the lives of the residents. The rules and procedures involved in fixing and consecrating these spirits houses are decided on by monks and are of great importance, such is the effect an unruly land spirit can have on those in or close to its domain. Almost every building in Thailand has a spirit house within their grounds, and the nature of the spirit house will reflect the size, structure and grandeur (or otherwise) of the place it protects. The land spirits will be persuaded to reside in that house rather than affecting the occupants of the main building, and there are good reasons for doing this. Having once undertaken a photographic project to document these spirit houses it quickly became apparent that my presence and activities were not appreciated, and that project came to a very abrupt end.

The guardian spirits are essentially the rulers of their area, and their power is focussed in their respective shrines and the land around it. To tap their potential, a person needs to go there as with an increasing distance from their shrine, their power declines, with little influence outside the borders of their realm. The practice of placating the land spirits is Animist in principle, and as with all Animism, it deals with power and the morality of that power is immaterial 1.

With the Guardian spirits, and pretty much every other spirit or ghost in the Thai practices, the dealings are businesslike and tend to constitute the principle of 'favour for a favour'. The general belief is that any power that is available is there to be tapped, and the person who does not avail himself of the opportunity once presented is considered a little foolish or ignorant. Where you get particularly strong guardian spirits or spirits that inhabit a certain area, a spirit house is often constructed to both appease the spirit and allow the chance to seek favours from them. Rows of these ornate, small houses are found on dangerous bends or in places where accidents frequently occur, as well as with haunted trees that have strong associated spirits. With the guardian spirit for the home compound (the *Chao Thi*), requests are generally made for protection when a member of the family is travelling or for the day to day problems of life, such as with business, love matters, and even the health of a relative. The practice of appeasing the land spirits is undertaken by people from all the levels of society, even by the ones who may not believe in such things, where a 'just in case' attitude prevails.



6. Old spirit houses and statues placed at the base of a Bodhi Tree.



7. The Mae Takien Shrine at Nakhon Pathom that was at the centre of a scandal.

The Tree Spirits

Mae Takien

The economic effect of having a strong spirit in the vicinity has led to a few strange happenings, most of which end up in the pages of the salacious newspapers or as features on TV programmes, which often feature magical incidents in the country. The Thais lap up these stories and many will visit the site in question, spending money on food, amulets and souvenirs, and because of this, some of these events are faked.

In 2003 there was a story in the media about five young women being caught dancing topless to thank the spirit of a haunted tree for helping them with a win on the lottery. With further investigations, it turned out that the teenage girls from Bangkok did not win the lottery, but had been hired to show up at the Takien tree in Nakhon Pathom's Kampaeng Saen district and perform. They had been paid to go there and strip, which caused a small stampede of the men present and their actions coincided with efforts by the temple next to the shrine to increase its popularity with both local and travelling worshippers. Despite the fact that the organisers were caught out, people still visit this shrine and rub the fallen trunk of this famous tree in the hope that numbers will appear magically on their fingertips that they can then gamble on. Certain bookmakers are reluctant to take any bets from customers who are either devotees of this spirit, or are known to live close to some of the important Mae Takien shrines in this country. The accepted belief here in Thailand is that people who get their weekly lottery numbers with the help of a Takien tree or shrine do win more often than those who do not. ²

The large trunk at the temple is believed to contain a potent female spirit known as Mae Takien, (one of the Nang Maai - 'lady of the tree', which is a spirit akin to kind of fairy). The Takien tree is of the same family of the Bodhi tree, the tree that stood over The Buddha as he attained enlightenment, and they can be enormous. The spiritual lore around this tree probably arose because if this tree is cut down, it emits a terrible and woeful cry as it falls, which lead to the tree being paid homage to before a felling could take place to appease the spirit within. The legend of this spirit states that Mae Takien sings mournful songs to attract any wandering men, drawing them closer before squeezing the life out of them in a deathly embrace. This tree spirit is a powerful enchantress who is entreated by people who live in the vicinity of this tree because the Thais believe that these lesser spirits grant boon with ease when compared to the rather hassled, higher deities. Mae Takien may hurt wicked or immoral people, but the righteous have nothing to fear from her. ³

Legends in Thai folklore say that the spirit in the Takien tree sometimes appears as a beautiful young woman with her hair brushed to one side and



8. The Mae Takien shrine at Wat Nang Kui, Ayuthaya.



9. A Mae Takien shrine on the banks of the Chao Phraya, Bangkok.



10. A rare statue to Mae Takien. The oil in the glass phial is the Takien Oil that flows from the tree when extremely haunted.

wearing traditional Thai attire, usually in red or gold. It is odd that when found in nature, the area around the tree rarely has underbrush and seems to be tidy, as if someone has swept up. The tree is massive and can live for centuries, with a wide-spreading root system and is, therefore, rarely planted close to homes.

Mae Takien inhabits the area around the tree, but she may also haunt areas where the wood is used in a house as beams or pillars, and therefore this wood is avoided for that use. Because of this, it is rarely cut as it infuriates the spirit and she will follow the wood to where ever it is to be used unless it is in a Wat, where the merit of the monks is considered sufficient to appease her fury. Where her wood is used for a specific purpose like building a boat, the makers can entreat her spirit to protect the ships and the men within. Unfortunately, in modern times, and with the value of these hardwoods, even the wrappings placed on these trees by monks to protect them rarely stop them being cut down, which can be dangerous to the workers if the correct permission has not been sought from the resident ghost. This spirit is very protective of her domain.

Mae Takien is a seductress, and her presence in an amulet or statue seeks both to enchant the opposite sex and provide boon. She bonds well with her devotees, bringing the protective fury she is known for and granting boon with ease. Her works are easy to spot due to the colours of her dress, and she often comes with Prai materials. The Prai enhances her spiritual power, and is usually sourced from a female who died violently. One of the best uses of Takien wood is when it is carved into the image of other spirits and deities as she adds a spiritual charge to their presence. Amulets carved from Takien wood can also be placed into Nam Man Prai for 'extra battery power' and some superb examples are seen. Phra Ngang is often carved from this wood, but the wood can be used for any figure, depending on the Wicha and lineage of the maker.

If driving through a rural area or even in the towns and cities in Thailand, there are often trees that have a row of elegant dresses next to them and a shrine placed below. While some are for other 'Nang Maai' tree spirits, they are predominantly for Mae Takien, and the local people upkeep the shrine, making sure that she is satisfied and praised ⁴. An altar is not constructed at every Takien tree, just the ones where she has been seen or has answered wishes made by the local folk and her shrine has risen as a result of her boon rather than just because it is a Takien tree.

There are quite a few superb Mae Takien shrines in Thailand with the most famous being at Wat Koh Wang Sai in Nakhon Pathom, Wat Nang Kui in Ayuthaya and the "Chao Pho Khao Chang" shrine located in Sattahip. Mae Takien shrines have a particular feeling, and anyone interested in The Thai Occult can experience this when visiting the Land of Smiles through visiting one of her places of worship and making an offering.

Mae Tanee - The lady of the banana tree

Mae Tanee is another famous tree spirit that belongs to the class of the Nang Maai, but in this case she inhabits one type of banana tree known as Tanee, which dies after it flowers. Like Mae Takien she is represented as a beautiful young woman but here her dress is green, and she is wearing an old style of Thai top which exposes the midriff. She hides in the clumps of banana trees and is difficult to see, only emerging on the nights of a full moon to show her green complexion, blending well with the trees. Mae Tanee can appear as standing, but her feet do not touch the floor (although in some representations her feet cannot be seen) and her dress ends in a wisp that drifts into the banana tree from whence she came.

Mae Tanee is a spirit that is believed to offer food to passing monks, but she is also known to visit young men, overpowering them with her wild sexual favours while feeding on their life force. The men may die in the end from being sexually overloaded so please avoid having sex with the tree spirits in Thailand. Mae Tanee is also renowned for having a vengeful disposition and being jealous to the point where, if a man has sex with Mae Tanee and then goes with another woman, she will hunt him down and snap his neck. If anyone out there likes a more obsessive type of lady in his life, Mae Tanee might be a perfect match.

Strangely, with the bearers of Sak Yant tattoos, one of the rules from some lineages is that the holder should not sleep under a banana tree, because if it is a Tanee, the spirit can find its way through the Yant and possess the body. Due to this danger and as most people had Sak Yant until this current generation, few Thais who grew up watching their grandparents grow Tanee banana trees within the confines of their picket fences.

This type of banana is not cultivated within the villages but are prevalent in the wilder areas, and although they look like a regular banana tree, the fruit is not edible. Offerings are made to Mae Tanee in the wild in the form of incense, sweets, and flowers and often, the locals will wrap a cloth around any banana tree that is believed to be haunted. The leaves of her tree are used to wrap various foods to no ill effect, and in Thai traditional medicine it is used for the treatment of ulcers.

While rare to see statues of Mae Tanee, her image is sometimes used for amulets where she is depicted as a seated or standing lady in a green dress under a banana tree. One recent statue to Mae Tanee contained the skin of a certain frog and they always feel strongly enchanted. Her charms are generally Prai based but this must be Prai from a woman, and her works are particularly compelling for attraction and enchantment. They can be worn by either sex.



11. A large talisman to Mae Tanee from Phra Ajarn O.
The Wicha for Mae Tanee can involve the use of frog skin and various mushrooms.



12. Mae Tanee in the Hell Gardens of Wat Mae Kaet Noi, Chiang Mai.

Thai Ghosts

The Thai people believe in ghosts, and not as some abstract idea while imagining a man with a sheet on his head running around going 'Woo'. Ghosts are a fact of life to most Thais, and each ghost has characteristics that should be feared and given respect. Believing such as this can be seen as making it so, but people believe in ghosts here because the boundary between this world and the world of the spirits is thin ⁵. These ghosts are deemed able to affect the lives of the living, and the Thai people have a healthy respect for their abilities, as well as for the techniques used to limit their possible adverse effects on their lives.

Many visitors to Thailand who have made Thai friends will have spent a night talking about ghosts or telling ghost stories, and the fear produced is palpable. Their reaction to telling these stories is to lower their voices, and check that no one is listening because to voice these things may bring the ghosts closer to them. The Thai film industry survives on a steady release of ghost stories and horror, and excellent ones have been made over the past few decades. Going to the cinema to watch these with Thai friends is a joy as because their fear is physical, the relief of laughter is grabbed at every opportunity. The belief in the presence of ghosts is deep within the Thai psyche and they are perceived to be around us all the time, affecting our lives and our relationship to others. Whether they originate from the dead or the natural world, there's more Phi in The Land of Smiles than you can wave a penis at. (Flashing the genitals is one way to send a ghost running, although this may depend on the size and look of the genitals being flashed)

One look at a brief list of Thai ghosts is enough to see how deep this goes into the culture, and this is not just the ghosts of people, these are specific ghost types. The ghosts of people are taken as a class of their own and can result from violent death, incorrect funeral rights or being wronged in life, and almost all can be malevolent unless adequately approached, appeased and respected. Some famous ghosts fall under this category like the legend of Mae Nak, a mighty female ghost that even has a shrine in her honour in Bangkok, where she gets a steady stream of visitors asking for her help. Shrines to spirits are numerous in Thailand, and some will be listed at the end of this section but first, here is a list of famous ghost types as relayed by the family of the author's Thai partner.

Phi Krasue – The Phi Krasue is one of the most feared ghosts in Thailand, and it is depicted as a head that floats with its partial intestines hanging below, often covered by a dress. A Phi Krasue usually takes the form of a beautiful woman (well, the head anyway) in a long flowing dress and are known to mesmerise their victims. These ghosts are also part of Laotian, Cambodian and Malay beliefs and are prone to try to find pregnant women either immediately before or just after birth. The ghost will then attempt to enter them with her long tongue to consume the foetus, or the placenta.

During the daytime this ghost lives in the body of an ordinary person, but as soon as they fall asleep the Phi Krasue can roam. The person whom the ghost inhabits may not even be aware of it, and it is a parasitic relationship that can be hereditary, passing from one generation to the next. If a family is thought to harbour these ghosts, the locals can make their lives difficult in an attempt to force them to leave the area 6.

Phi Krahang – This is a male ghoul that is akin to a male version of a Phi Krasue as it too only comes out once the host is asleep, but this ghost flies around looking for filth to eat. These originate from men who have done too much Saiyasart magic, and it eats them from the inside to form this ghoul. In the North of the country, this is known as a Phi Phong.

Phi Phob – This is an evil ghoul that is used and directed by witches that can enter the host and consume the internal organs, only leaving once the host has died. This ghost hides well, but those possessed by Phi Phob will often pretend to be ill, although at some point they will be spotted stealing uncooked meat to eat when alone. The Phi Phob ghost is also known to affect magicians who have acted immorally with the Wicha of their spells, which evolves into the ghost itself. A transformation such as this can occur if the occultist stops his profession, uses his spells for absolute harm to others, charges excessive fees, fails to respect his lineage or breaks the taboos associated with it. The ghost can then also move along the familial line, and there are examples in Thailand of whole families having to relocate due to a Phi Phob possessing one member. This possession usually shows itself as an illness where the ghost is seen as consuming the insides of the person, which is often allied to some a mental disturbance. In this case, an exorcist is called to both identify the spirit and begin the process to remove it.

The origin of Phi Phob comes from an old legend of a Prince who was fond of magic, and he found the way to enter people's bodies and take control of them. He then also learned the incantations to enable him to move into animals but while he was practising, his servant, who had memorised the words, repeated them and entered the body of the prince. As a result, he became the Prince! The real Prince, having entered a bird, rushed to tell the truth to his wife and she then destroyed the servant's body and managed to persuade the false Prince to pass into the body of an animal to demonstrate his abilities. The real Prince then returned to his body, but the servant was not able to re-enter his own body and the Phi Phob of today comes from this original wandering spirit.

Phi Am – This is a ghost that sits on the chest of sleeping people, causing discomfort. To defend against this ghost, men put on lipstick before retiring to bed in the belief that these female widow ghosts are women, who won't harm other ladies. The Thais will take any action to avoid attention from ghosts, and sometimes seek any excuse for cross-dressing tendencies.



13. The spirit familiars of an Ajarn.

Phi Dued Luat – This ghost resembles the Western Vampire in that it sucks the blood of its victims. There's also the vampires that have entered the Thai ghost lore from the Chinese community here, which hop and are called Phi Dip Chin. These are a favourite in many Thai horror films as a relief from the terror due to their comical aspect, making two-footed jumps with their arms extended. There's also a forest vampire with one leg called Phi Khong Koi, and it is possible that there are many more regional variations, as with all the types of ghost in this section.

Phi Pret - This is a suffering ghost that is also known as an *Asurakai* - an inhabitant of the netherworld. In Thai beliefs, after death, a person that has a deficit of good deeds is assigned to a particular level of hell until such a time that the debt is repaid. A Pret has such a burden of karma that it will never be reborn in the human world, remaining stranded in the netherworld, which leads to an eternity of suffering. Tall, with long hair, an elongated neck, protruding belly and a mouth as small as a needle so it can never manage to get enough to eat ⁷.

The Phi Pret is a bad-tempered and aggressive ghost that can be heard whistling at night (whistle at night in Thailand and see the response of Thai friends), looking for someone to make merit for them. These are a part of Buddhist mythology rather than being specifically Thai, and the name is related to the Sanskrit word *Preta* ⁸, (the same ghost in Hindu Mythology). In China, this is the 'hungry ghost', and there is a yearly festival in their honour.

Phi Ka – These are spirits that dwell inside women that can be violent and attack people. The treatment for these is force the host to eat raw eggs as this ghost detests them.

Phi Pong - a type of forest spirit that lives near salt licks and appears in the shape of a langur but with its upper lip drawn back to expose the teeth. It likes drinking blood ⁹.

There are blind ghosts, ghosts of old men, the ghosts of the sea that are related to maritime phenomena like St Elmo's Fire, and there's a ghost with a large wound on its back. There is the ghost that is able to move a glass, luminescent ghosts, ghosts related to snakes and the ghosts of termite mounds. Some spirits can transform, ghosts that appear as two small boys and even a female ghost that lures, and then attacks and kills young men. It is amazing anyone goes out at night! Especially considering that this is a brief list of only some of the ghost types in Thailand, but it does give you an indication of the sheer quantity. Everyone knows these types due to their presence in everything from the steady stream of Thai TV soap operas (and many of the characters have severe spiritual problems at one time or another) to popular Thai films. Through the eyes of the Thai people, ghosts are everywhere, and this has all had an effect on the culture. Most of the

author's Thai friends merely shrug and ignore them all, holding their centre and not allowing their presence through any worry or acknowledgement. They regard being 'haunted' is as much a mental state as it is spiritual and through the practice of meditation and Buddhism since birth, many are able to resist the pull of ghosts. The same Thai friends will then be utterly terrified when watching a ghost film, and many a trip to watch a movie has resulted in a grip mark on an arm, outlined with bruising.

With a newborn child, it is considered essential to deceive the ghosts of the vicinity, achieved by giving the child two names, an official name that is used on their ID card and their short name. The short name is given at birth and reflects typically, something related to the pregnancy, the situation of the family, the year of birth or the child itself. Many children are named Bon, because they were born in the year of the world cup (Bon is the Thai pronunciation of Ball as a word ending in an 'l' becomes an 'n'). Another one is 'Joke', who was called that because his mum craved Joke (a Thai rice porridge) while pregnant. This habit is said to have originated to confuse the ghosts and protect the child. The short name can also be changed after periods of bad luck or life-changing events to cast off any harmful elements associated with the name.

And finally, the following two ghost types are the most used within the Thai Occult practices, described here by **Ajarn Apichai**. In the Thai Occult, many consider that the strongest talismans have to contain some part of the body of one of the two sources discussed with this young, talented magician.

The Phi Tai Hong - A Phi Tai Hong is the ghost from the person that died in an accident (either male or female) and as far as being useful in the creation of Thai Occult talismans, the more terrible the accident the more supernaturally powerful it is. The death of the person has to be very sudden because this results in the fact that the spirit does not realise that they have died. A person who died before their time is also classed as a Phi Tai Hong, meaning that suicide victims and murder victims are also valuable to Ajarns, as are people who died with a grudge. These circumstances make the spirit quite ferocious, and they cannot enter the spiritual world or move on to their next life. They are stuck in this world, and because they have died so suddenly, the spirit retains all the desires they had in life. They died clinging to this world. The Phi Tai Hong is very strongly supernatural, and this type of corpse is one of the best sources of materials to use to make amulets, statues and Nam Man Prai. Nam Man Prai (corpse oil) from a Phi Tai Hong is potent and highly protective.

The Phi Tai Tang Glom - A Phi Tai Tang Glom is the ghost of a woman who died while giving birth or during pregnancy, which also results in the death of the baby. It can also be considered to be a Phi Tai Hong ghost if both die before the birth of the baby, but the principle is that the mother and child will always be together, doubling the power of the ghost and making it an

awesome supernatural entity. The power of the Phi Tai Tang Glom can be boosted further if they die in a sudden accident or by suicide, and of the choices of accident available, a drowning is considered to be the ultimate source. In amulets made from these remains, the mother spirit is good for bestowing the attributes of Metta and Maha Saneah. The child spirit, as with a Kuman Thong brings luck and fortune, making the combination of the two spirits highly desired in Occult circles.

There is a famous old Master Sorcerer called Phor Sala Tan, who has been responsible for the training of many of the new generations of Ajarns who specialised in magic from the Lanna traditions (Lanna is the name of the old Northern Kingdom). He was renowned for working with five spirits in his practices, all of which were Phi Tai Tang Glom and they are of such force that he was known for cross-dressing when performing rituals to confuse these ghosts to avoid them harming him. Phor Sala Tan was a spritely and accomplished practitioner, still following this method up to his passing away recently at 92 years of age. He reputedly had many wives and lovers, even up to his death.

If anyone thinks that the tapping of exceptional spiritual and occult forces is a thing of the past, the story of a politician who is known to use magic of all kinds to achieve his goals will serve as a caution. A scandal erupted some years ago when he started to project to renovate the Erawan Shrine in Bangkok, where hundreds of people pray and make offerings daily to grab the chance to redirect the spiritual energy towards himself. There was outrage when the details were released, and his opponents rushed to cut off this source of power, but the mere attempt to do it was a fascinating insight into his and the world of his opponents.

Elite intellectuals, avant-garde filmmakers, members of the royal family and millions of monks, novices, nuns and laypeople in urban and rural areas respect the power of ghosts and the efficiency of the protective chants that are used to combat them. In 2010, for the first time in the history of Thai filmmaking, a Thai film, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, by Apichatpong Weerasethakul won the Cannes Film Festival Palme d'Or, and of course, it was about ghosts! In an interview with the BBC after he won the prize, the esteemed director stated,

"I would like to thank all the spirits and the ghosts in Thailand, who made it possible for me to be here." ¹⁰.

Famous Ghost Shrines

The City Pillar, Bangkok

It may seem very odd to start with the pillar that can be viewed as the heart of the capital city of Thailand, fulfilling the role of the guardian spirit of the metropolis itself. The national records for the placing of this pillar were lost during the sacking of Ayuthaya by the Burmese in the mid-1760's and what remains is the legend, embellished over the centuries. Quite a number of Thai films have been produced of this salacious tale.

Before the placing of any City Pillar, the auspicious time and place must be determined by the Royal Court, who receive advice from their Royal fortune tellers and Brahmin Priests. On deciding the correct position of the pillar, four names were postulated as the best for the people to use in this ritual, and the residents of the area were asked if their names were In, Jan, Man or Khong. These people were then collected and brought to have the details of their lives checked. The correct people to use for the ceremony had to be respectable with no criminal record, no man should have a tattoo, and no woman should have their ears pierced. They had to be decent people and neither too rich nor too poor. Those acceptable were then fed and taken care of by the King.

On an auspicious day and at the correct time, all the people chosen were forced into the hole that had been made ready for the city pillar, and it was dropped onto the people below from a height thought sufficient to kill them, at least one of whom was pregnant. The legend says that there were more than four people that fit the correct description for the poor, unfortunate folk who were chosen and they remain there to this day. Their families were given recompense for their loss, and now Bangkok is protected by both Phi Tai Hong and Phi Tai Tang Glom ghosts, all in one place, which is frankly terrifying.

This is high necromancy as practised by the old state of Siam and the effect is there for all to feel and witness as it stands close to The Grand Palace, possibly the most popular tourist destination in Bangkok.

Pop in.
Check it out.
It is interesting.

(Unfortunately, due to the passing of The King, it was not possible to gain access to the shrine to take a photograph, but one will be added to The Thai Occult Books facebook site at a later date)

Mae Nak

The story of Mae Nak ('Mother Nak' or sometimes also known as Nang Nak – Miss Nak) is set in the district of Phra Khanong (now in modern Bangkok) and is without doubt, Thailand's most famous ghost story. It has been the subject of many films, an animated feature, TV shows and even a musical. It's earliest known telling was as part of a folk performance that dates back to the 1920's. In this, her name was 'Ee Nak' (the title of Ee in modern Thai means 'lower class woman', still used by Thai Katoey and people working in the nightlife industries).

The story ¹¹ is generally accepted to be accurate and based on real events, but there are so many versions of it that it seems that every Thai person knows a slightly different tale. The tale of Mae Nak is a living story that goes to the heart of the culture, playing on the superstitions of the people and their fascination with tragic love stories, in many ways like the legend of Khun Paen. It is thought to date from somewhere in the middle of the 19th Century, but some accounts have it at least 100 years before then. In the Thai custom, stories of this type evolve with the telling over the generations, each version developing twists of their own, continuing the oral and folk traditions of this land.

Mae Nak was a beautiful young woman who was married to Mak, and they lived in the district of Phra Khanong, near to Wat Mahabut. Mae Nak was pregnant when her husband was called off to war, but which war varies in the tales between fighting the Shan, the Vietnamese or battles in the North of Thailand. Tragically, both Nak and the child died during childbirth before Mak could make it back to his home, effectively creating one of the most feared types of ghost, a Phi Tai Tang Glom.

Mak returned some time later (either after being severely injured or not, depending on the version of the tale) but is unaware of what has happened to his pregnant wife, and is greeted by the ghosts of his dead wife and child. Blissfully ignorant of the fact that they are not alive he resumes his life with his family, not believing other villagers who tell him that his family is dead; a deceit which ensures a quick end to their life from a vengeful Mae Nak. In one of the classic scenes, Mak drops something on the floor (what fell also varies wildly), and Mae Nak extends a ghostly arm to retrieve the item from some distance away. Mak sees this and realises that the warnings from the villagers were justified and he runs from the house, taking refuge in the Wat, where she cannot enter due to its inherent spiritual protection. At this point, the Thai people are touched that her love has extended to beyond the grave and that she only wanted to be with her husband, even as a ghost. Cut off from Mak and enraged, she goes wild, terrorising the people of the area, but eventually a monk manages to confine her to an earthenware pot that is thrown into the nearby canal. (The Wat and canal are still there to this day if anyone fancies trying to find this pot?) ¹²



14. One of the very few bronzes ever made to Mae Nak, and by a renowned monk too! The baby was made separately but don't take it away or she gets pissed.



15. The shrine of Mae Nak, Wat Mahabut, On Nut, Bangkok.
 The shrine has recently been renovated, this is an image from around 4 years ago.

Some versions of the story say that the villagers had an almighty battle with the spirit, attempting to banish her using various magical methods before the famous monk, Somdej Tho was called upon to intervene. One version has the pot found by two fishermen, and eager to see the possible riches inside, release her for another spiritual battle to ensue. In this version, she is even wilder as Mak has moved on with his life and found a new girlfriend! This one is a highly dramatic tale, like many Thai stories but in the classic version, Somdej Tho manages to subdue her spirit and controls it by taking her third eye skull piece (*her Panneng*), tying it to his belt (This is one of the few mentions of a Panneng in the written history of Thailand) ¹³. In yet another alternative version, Somdej Tho also helps her pass on, away from the earth and all the chaos that she has brought, to eventually be reunited with the spirit of her husband once he passes too, affirming their bond even after death. The Thai people tend to get all slushy at that version because it confirms their belief in a love that lasts an eternity, even through many reincarnations, because one lifetime is never enough for a love that is true.

This story does not end there though, as many accounts of appearances of Mae Nak continue to this day, as do versions of the films and TV series of her story. One of the great aspects of this tale is that it feels fresh and could easily have happened in 'modern' Thailand, where ghost stories of a similar type arise quite often. If in Thailand, it is always fun to ask friends about the story of Mae Nak, and they will pass on their version of the tale, usually spoken with a hushed voice in case she hears.

The Shrine Of Mae Nak

The temple in the tale, Wat Mahabut is a popular place of worship in a busy part of the city of Bangkok, near to On Nut Skytrain Station. At the back of the temple grounds is the shrine of Mae Nak, surrounded by amulet shops, fortune tellers and food stalls. The shrine attracts a stream of visitors, and is favoured by those looking for good exam results or for people who have problems with a partner or loved one. If the wish of the devotee is granted, a new dress may be bought for the spirit to thank her (which are for sale at the counter) or some makeup offered so she can still feel beautiful while dead. The author once left an amulet of Mae Nak as a gift after a particular scenario worked out well, in a demonstration to show her that she is still loved to this day.

With any visit to this shrine, because of the popularity and the fearsome ladies who take care of the place, please be calm, polite and discreet with photographs to ease the visits of any future foreign visitors. For a 20 baht donation, the lady at the counter will pass a yellow candle, two sticks of incense and a small piece of gold leaf; flowers can also be purchased as part of the act of devotion. First go to the shrine on the right, kneel, light your incense and stand them in the trough, while the candle should stand on the bar closest to you. Then do your devotions and pay your respects in

any way you feel comfortable and don't worry about any set rules, this part is relaxed, and it depends on the person to a great extent.

Looking up at this point, you will see the figure of Mae Nak is in the raised room ahead, and she is something to behold. Of all the ghost shrines in Thailand, this is the strongest one and the feeling from her radiates. Now go to this second level and Wai in front of her to ask a wish before pressing the gold leaf on her hand while keeping the request in mind. Placing the gold leaf on her hand involves being next to Mae Nak, and it is a creepy experience.

Then, quietly exit.

One hundred and nine years after the origin story of Mae Nak, a child known as **Nong Ae** died at the age of just 39 days and since he died an unnatural death, he was buried instead of cremated, which is an ancient practice. The problem was that within a short time he rose to the surface during a flood and his distressed parents asked the abbot of Wat Mahout to take care of Baby Ae. He can be found to this day in the temple grounds (Two Ghost Shrines in one temple!), so do search him out. It is worth going to see him, and please take a toy for the boy.

Mae Niyom

Mae Niyom Chiwasuwan was born in 1925 in Thonburi and was a local beauty who loved Thai dancing. Her life was happy until World War 2 when she tragically died from diarrhoea at the age of 17, but her family was in a position to hold her funeral, and they asked the undertaker to keep her body at the temple during those terrible times. In 1960 the temple decided to clear the 70 or 80 unclaimed bodies that had accumulated during the war, and when they opened her coffin, they found her to be mummified rather than having suffered decomposition. In Thailand this is considered to be a highly auspicious event, only occurring with the bodies of some high monks.

The Abbot and the Temple Committee thought that she must have been born with great merit. They decided to dress her in white, put her in the corner of the temple grounds and give a chance for the locals to praise her spirit. People flocked to her as they believed that she embodied Maha Niyom (Great Popularity to improve business and personal relationships) and she was also excellent at granting lottery wins for her worshippers. As her fame spread, the present shrine was built for her and she is there to this day, waiting for visitors to pop by and offer their devotions.

She stands in a case in the corner of a temple's grounds and is a real body, mouth slightly agape and now desiccated, having been there for over 70 years. On one recent visit, an older helper at the temple said that once per year they change her clothes, and he helps with that task. He said that



16. Nong Ae.



17. Mae Niyom.



18. And each year her clothes are changed.



19. As with many ghosts, Mae Niyom is famous for granting wishes.

some of her flesh is still soft and pliant, particularly at the back of the arms and legs. The changing of her clothes occurs at around Thai New Year in April, and an invite has been given next year to witness and photograph the event. Often, as a Westerner with an interest in the strange things that many Thais consider an ancient belief, it is refreshing for them to share their experiences and often offer a chance to join in with a ritual.

Mae Niyom is a powerful ghost and there are numerous accounts of her haunting people. There was once a Chinese man who lived close to the temple who dreamt about her, and she told him that if he photographed and praised her, he would become wealthy. He did exactly that and wealth came. Mae Niyom is renowned for granting wishes and people have offered her clothes, perfume and even gold as a gift for the wishes she has granted. There were so many offerings at one time that they had to clear the shrine, which included many gifts of gold, selling everything to raise funds for the temple itself.

At this present time, her shrine is a little messy as she is not as popular as she once was so if the reader decides to visit, please take her flowers, burn incense and offer a prayer for her to grant you a wish. As always, please be polite and remove the shoes before making the necessary devotions. The temple has many cats so also take food for them, if possible. If she grants a wish, buy her a dress, makeup or more flowers, and slowly this amazing place will be a spiritual battery that can serve the community once more. Watch how she stays in the mind after a visit, she is persistent. This action is described as her 'pull', which also occurs with strong occult talismans and other powerful ghosts, where they repeatedly come to mind, and to dreams as well.

Mae Niyom grants the attribute of Maha Niyom (popularity), something quite unusual in the range of attributes that spirits or deities commonly bestow on their followers. She resides in Bangkok at Wat Bang Sakae, which is near to the Sky Train Station Talad Phlu, over the river in the Thonburi side of the city. Take her some flowers and say hi, she would be delighted to see you.

Mae Nang Phim

There are some instances where a spirit or deity will approach a monk or an Ajarn during their periods in deep Samathi, which can lead to new types of amulets; with some eventually becoming nationally popular.

Until modern times, the Thai people have had to cope with illness and health problems without any organised national health system, relying upon the ancient use of herbs and the abilities of those who practised the natural ways of magic. The time of pregnancy was a period particularly fraught with dangers due to there only being the knowledge of the midwife or the elders of the village, nothing like the luxurious clean hospitals and Western-trained

staff of today. There were no gynaecologists or doctors, and many women died during labour because of blood loss or the complications that can occur with birth. This same tragedy happened with Mae Nang Phim, there were complications with the birth, leading to the loss of the child and she knew she was also going to die.

As death approached, she prayed to the beings above, beseeching them so that no other woman should experience the pain she was going through, and asked for blessings for all women to have a smooth delivery when their time came. As she did not ask for the help for herself, the Buddha himself was touched by this noble woman who fought till her last breath for her child to live while asking for help for all in her position, not just for herself. After she passed away, she was raised to be a Deva to look after all people, and she took her place to reside on the mountain. This mythical place is for earthbound spirits that have been raised to be a Deva, such as Mae Per and Phra Ngang and therefore, they are above all ghosts and spirits. This idea of the mythical mountain may come directly from the region's ancient Indian influences.

One day, Mae Nang Phim approached a monk called Luang Phor Up who resided at Wat Thong Sai in Nakhon Pathom while in Samathi and taught him about herself, her Wicha and how to consecrate her amulets to be able to help people. Luang Phor Up became the first person to make her talismans and what marks them in particular, is the feeling and beauty. At the Wat, there is a large shrine to Mae Nang Phim, shining bright and golden and emitting a light magical essence of beneficence. Many locals go to request her help with relationships, business, health and childbirth and the Wat is a vibrant place, even after the passing of Luang Phor a few years ago. It is not easy to find Wat Thong Sai in Nakhon Pathom, but it is well worth a visit for anyone interested in Thai Magic and how it still affects Thailand to this day.

Luang Phor Up was born in 1921 and was ordained at 20 years of age at Wat Thong Sai for nine years before he went for Tudong training. Tudong is 'a means of shaking off' and were practices of renunciation undertaken by the Tammayut forest monks. This is a branch of Thai Buddhism that follows the natural ways and often achieve highly magical states of being. The practice of Tudong can involve wandering in the wilds for years with few possessions, handling illness, collecting food and coping with dangers, with the eventual aim of ridding the mind of fear. Tudong involves meditating for prolonged periods in nature while being expected to uphold the necessary skills for survival. During his Tudong, Luang Phor Up studied with some very famous teachers, acquiring the knowledge and expertise with Thai herbs and learning the Wicha of many renowned guru monks.

Luang Phor Up returned to Wat Thong Sai in 1966 and became famous for his '*Chae Naam Mon*' or holy water, through which he acquired fame and



20. The fabulous Mae Nang Phim shrine of Wat Thong Sai, Nakhon Pathom.



21. The shrine of the last man executed by beheading in Thailand.

many followers due to the water's healing abilities. With the visitation of Mae Nang Phim during meditation, he also became famous for her amulets as they brought great charm, success and luck in love, while protecting from the dangers of life. She is also one of the very few styles of amulet or statues that is believed to heal and cure sickness. As an offering, Mae Nang Phim likes a little alcohol and even makeup as a gift when a wish is fulfilled. Her kata is always 'U Ka Pa Sa Ha Na Pudh', repeated nine times, and Luang Phor Up recommended repeating the set of kata often and rubbing a little alcohol on her image for the best effect.

Her image is often as a lady with a golden Thai style headdress, naked, with large breasts and the two feet of her baby emerging from her body, forever in the act of painful childbirth. Most of her amulets are carved from select woods, but there are also some that contain the Prai materials from a woman who died in childbirth, a source which suits Mae Nang Phim's story. Her rather beautiful statues are usually made from a scented wood (Maai Khayun or Maai Tun) and have a Takrut spell inserted to invoke the deity. These statues are always brightly magical, and should be sought after by anyone interested in this beautiful Deva.

The Last Beheading

It strikes many as odd that the Thai people will ask for luck from the spirit of what is considered a very unlucky man, but ask they do at the shrine for Boonpeng Heep Lek. He was the last person to be publicly beheaded in Thailand on the 19th of August 1919, in the grounds of Wat Phasee, which at the time was on the outskirts of Bangkok.

The process for his execution was a rather grisly affair as they followed the guidelines to those used at the time of the story of Khun Paen, which is believed to have originated around the year 1500¹⁵. Following these rules, once a prisoner had been found guilty and sentenced to death, his case would be presented to the King for final approval. If that was granted, on the appointed day the prisoner would be whipped for three rounds, with 30 strokes for each round, in an attempt to help him to accept his demise or at least lessen his resolve to live. Then, on the way to the execution place, the prisoner might be punished further with the five instruments of restraint, which were leg chains, handcuffs, a neck chain, solid wooden stocks and waist chain.

A last meal would be given the prisoner, and then a monk would be invited to preach to him before being led out to where the prisoner had to sit with both his legs stretched forward, and his body fastened to a wooden cross. The prisoner's ears and mouth were filled with clay, and the base of his neck was marked to help the aim of the executioner (minus the words 'cut here'). An assistant of the executioner would then rhythmically dance with his sword in front of the prisoner and as soon as the prisoner's mind was

calm, the first executioner would then behead him from behind. After the execution of the prisoner, both of his feet would be cut off at the ankles to take the leg chains off, which was also seen as an action to stop his ghost wandering around. His flesh would be removed from the bones, chopped up into pieces and given to the vultures and crows. Boonpeng's head was placed on a sharp stick and displayed for everyone to see.

Today, the old graveyard for the executed is now built over by the temple school, and it can be presumed that it would be an eerie place after dark when deserted. The temple itself is an unusual design, which seems to be covering all the religions. There are shrines to some Chinese gods, the Buddha's for the days of the week, Thai royalty, an altar to Rahu, a trunk of Takien wood and a Naga shrine at the back; with the temple itself being of an Indian style. The temple has a troubled feeling, which is unusual for a place of worship.

At some point after the death of Boonpeng Heep Lek, locals were praying for his soul or making an offering at his grave and they must have received some good luck. The praising of the last executed man has come about due to the experience of the people, and many have had wishes granted. Shrines such as this do not just appear, they are as a result of the spirit of Boonpeng being kind to devotees by bestowing boon. Today, his shrine still receives a steady stream of people asking their wishes in the hope of them also being granted to improve their lot in life. What's in it for the spirit of Boonpeng? He gets the attention he craves as a spirit by being given the opportunity to give something back to the ones with life before them. In effect, this spirit should be classed as a Phi Tai Hong as his life was cut short by circumstances beyond his control, and the merit from the granting of boon will help his spirit rise towards an eventual rebirth.

The Cult of Pumpuang

Pumpuang was an incredibly popular singer of the traditional style of Thai music called Luk Thung at around the time when the economy of Thailand was booming. In the 1980's, there was considerable migration from the rural areas to the urban centres and for many of the young people then, she represented the ability to go to the city and become successful. The unfortunate reality was often a poorly paid labouring job or prostitution for those with little education, like Pumpuang herself but she had an incredible voice. Her life mirrored that of many of the young folk who sought a better existence in the cruel city to support their families back home, contributing to her massive following. The love of her is deep because through out her short life, Pumpuang was exploited by managers, husbands, lovers, record companies and promoters. While there was tragedy surrounding her life, on stage she was the queen and the surviving films of her performances are remarkable. She had come up with a new electronic style of traditional music, and her lyrics expressed the problems of life as well as all the joy.



22. The Shrine of Pumpuang, Wat Thab Kradan, Suphanburi.



23. The shrine is so popular that there are overspill shrines, where locals hang cloths and leave gifts for Pumpuang.

She was the fifth child of twelve children in the Suphan Buri area, and as her parents were itinerant workers, she received little of the compulsory education given in Thailand at that time. She sang from a very young age and became known as 'Nampung Na Rai Oi' (Honey From The Sugarcane Fields) because female stars at that time rarely went by their real names. Instead, they tried to find auspicious names to help make them famous. After working with a series of bands, she found someone who trained her to play with the music more, added elements of other styles, dance and made it all sexy. She broke nationwide in the mid-1980's with two very successful albums, a string of movie appearances and incessant touring that sadly inflicted a toll on her health. Unfortunately, in combination with her hard life, she had two auto-immune diseases that lead to her untimely death from kidney failure in 1992 at the age of just 30 years old.

At the time of her death, the family thought she had been cursed with black magic, and her brother showed journalists a nail that had been retrieved from her ashes, claiming it as evidence of malicious sorcery. There were terrible problems after she passed on, and the squabbles over her estate became nasty and prolonged. Even though she had earned 80 million baht in her career (an incredible sum at that time) it had all been squandered, embezzled or stolen; this added to the tragedy of her life and the shock at the loss of her talent.

Such was her popularity that she was granted a Royal Cremation, headed by the beloved Princess Sirindhorn and 150,000 people attended, marking the largest funeral for a non-Royal in Thailand's history. Subsequently, annual fairs were held at the temple to honour her, which generated much-needed revenue for the Wat and refreshed the public memory of the late singer.

The worship of Pumpuang's spirit did not become popular until people made the connection between the lottery and the singer's supernatural power, which was aided by a frenzied media. As Pattana Kitirsa wrote in the book *Mediums, Monks & Amulets* in 2012,

"The pop queen's ghost has been ritually elevated from the spirit of a young, famous lady to the status of a goddess of luck through popular belief in, and worship of her supernatural power and reputation for generosity in granting people winning lottery numbers and other kinds of luck".

The singer is also seen as a representative of the act of mourning, of sorrow and also hope, becoming a beacon of light for the disenfranchised of the land. Even as a ghost she is seen as helping others, to the point where fans built her a shrine in the temple where she was cremated and elevated her spirit to become a *Taep* (angel). People came to her shrine wanting their wishes to be fulfilled and eventually, the singer appeared in the dreams of her sister and encouraged her to use her ashes for amulets to ease their economic plight. The abbot at Wat Thab Kradan agreed, and everyone wins

from this; the family, the temple and even the spirit of Pumpuang as she gains merit from helping others.

Pumpuang has been the beneficiary of the fact that the creation of any new deity is intertwined with socio-economic forces, in this case, the craze for winning the lottery in the 80's. She represents the transformation of the economy of the countryside as well as the way that popular Buddhism can incorporate the spirit of a dead celebrity, and the resulting cult in a Wat's compound. The connections at that time between the belief in luck, spirit worship, gambling and the desire for material wealth all are evident within the cult to this dead superstar. 16

1. Neils Mulder - *Journal of the Siam Society* - Vol 17, 1979.
2. Suksit Magazine February 2014
3. From an interview with a successful seller of Thai Amulets, March 2016.
4. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p248.
5. A quote from Peter Christopherson of Coil, 2004.
6. Berend Jan Terwiel - *Monks and Magic* 1975 p53
7. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* 2010 p2
8. Berend Jan Terwiel - *Monks and Magic* 1975 p53
9. Berend Jan Terwiel - *Monks and Magic* 1975 p288
10. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* 2011 p99
11. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* 2011 p95
12. The process of neutralising Mae Nak in this version was to seal the corpse with wax and Sai Sin, with her child still inside her and submerge her into water. According to Chris Baker in *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p373 it is an ancient practice to trap a spirit in an earthenware pot, the lid closed and sealed by mantra and then submerged in a river.
13. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* 2011 p97
14. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* 2011 p169
15. Chris Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* 2010 p33
16. Pattana Kitiarsa - *Mediums, Monks & Amulets* 2012 p57 - 81

Thai Attitudes To Death

It is important to discuss this aspect of the Thai culture before proceeding further because some details in this book may lead the reader to think that the Thai people are uncaring, or even inhuman in the way they perceive and deal with death.

When first visiting Thailand in 1991, on waking on the first day, very jet lagged and went down to get water from the local newsagent; a glance at the front page of The Bangkok Post was a little shocking. There was a story detailed there about someone they must have considered famous enough to be on the front page, after an accident in his Mercedes Benz. The body of the departed had gone through the windscreen and was lying on the bonnet with the top of his head open, displaying his brains. The man who owned the shop noticed the display of shock and pointed to the photo laughing and saying something in Thai. In a situation like this, as a new visitor, the only possible reaction was to laugh along with him and point as well, but it was an event that stayed in mind.

Within Buddhism, death is as much a part of life as being born, and a culture with an acceptance of this relates to it in a different way than people in The West. The wheel of life applies to everyone and dying is only the first step towards being reborn into a new life, through which the person will carry their accumulated karma. Some rebirths have a terrible burden, coming back to endure awful circumstances, while some are very privileged indeed and they are both seen as the natural course of things. This system not only allows plenty of room for a dark version of Thai comedy, but also instils in the people respect for the rich because they can be seen to have spiritually earned a better rebirth. Each person does attempt to avoid this by leading a life as in tune with the Buddhist ways as that rebirth can accomplish.

The Buddha once asked his disciples about how often they contemplated death, and they all tried to better each other, finally ending at the point where one monk said that he considered death with each breath, because that is all that separates us from dying. That's all it takes, the inhalation comes in, it goes out, and one day it won't come in again. The Buddha said that this is an essential part of meditation as it removes the fear of death, the process of which starts the day we are born. The removal of fear brings the freedom to be happy, and leads to a life that has proper values, with the hope that one day we will die a good death. It is natural, as is rebirth to the Buddhists.

The Buddhist view is that the impersonal stream of consciousness flows from life to life, impelled by ignorance and craving, with the eventual aim of gaining enlightenment to relieve us of the burden of living and coping with all the entailed suffering once more. The theory is a complex one, here briefly stated but the reality of the attitudes to death in Thailand often

leaves the visitor shocked at the presumed flippant, disrespectful attitude that can be seen on a daily basis.

The newspapers and magazines used to be stuffed with vivid pictures of terrible accidents, but this has slowly declined out of the understanding that others do not always see death in the same way. With friends and guests to Thailand, one of the places to visit that was a jaw-dropping must on the list of things to do, was to take them to what came to be known as 'suicide window'. The window was at a Wat in central Bangkok, well known as a charitable organisation that paid for the cremation of the bodies of suicides and accident victims. While being a worthy charity that fulfils a vital role in society, they often placed photographs of many of the victims in the window of their office, and this was on the main road! Pictures of electrocutions, terrible accident, gunshot wounds, drownings, murders, knife wounds, kids who had been mauled by propellers, the effects of exploding gas canisters and the bloated corpses of bodies not found till the rot had set in. An odd thing was that whenever visited, there were always some Thai people there, pointing at particular photos and giggling while holding the hand of a loved one.

The Thai people are as loving towards each other as any other people, but with the structure of society here, these concerns tend to be confined to the immediate family and friends. A part of Buddhist teaching is that death's suffering is relieved only by the knowledge that it is universal, giving an underlying mood of resignation to the passage of life. The upset of losing a loved one is the same the world over, although the Thai's do tend to revere their departed loved ones on shrines in the home. Here, the life of the living is shared with the dead in a way alien to all but Western necromancers.

So why the attitude to the death of someone unknown to them? Why is it not unusual for ambulance drivers to pose with dead bodies and accident victims and post them on Facebook? From one blog, someone wrote:-

"I still remember vividly a horrible crash I had attended a while ago where a drunk Thai guy ran into some girls on a motorbike. One girl died instantly, and she was not a pretty picture to see. Another girl was in a bad way. As the crowd of gawkers gathered to rubberneck, children stood in front of their parents looking at the scene while parents talked. It made me sick to see this, and I couldn't believe that people could be such terrible parents. There are things that kids can see and other things that they shouldn't see." Isaan-style blog, February 26, 2009.

The Thai people are generally not offended by these displays as death is common on the roads here, with the country ranking as one of the most dangerous in the world for road fatalities, despite the efforts of a succession of governments. It is a tradition for the ambulance workers to be volunteers and many young Thai men perform this duty as part of their Buddhist path



24. It's now becoming more difficult to source images that shock in Thailand.



25. But some can still be found.

to be able to become accustomed to the frailty of life. Some of the extended family of the author also became volunteers to collect the dead, with the cousin of my partner becoming an ambulance worker. His parents viewed this charitable action with pride as he is fulfilling his duty to understand life, while offering Metta to the dead.

The most famous of these charitable organisations is the Por Teck Tung, and it was they who came to collect a friend after he had died in his sleep on November 25th, 2010. Being the first Westerner on the scene after being called by one of his resident lads, who was in a panic at his passing, there were two burly and rough looking Por Teck Tung guys taking care of Peter Christopherson. Everyone was crying and in a state of shock, but it was good to see that Peter had passed peacefully, so quietly that the friend he had slept with that night awoke to find him dead beside him.

The two men from the Por Teck Tung had him wrapped in a white shroud and were struggling to get him down some narrow stairs as Peter was a big chap. Everyone was worried that they would drop him. Someone joked at this, and all his friends added laughter to the crying. It is the Thai way to let go of upset so it is not an emotional burden. The Por Teck Tung lads eventually got him in the van and then did a beautiful thing, they lifted his dogs up to be able to lick Peter's hand to say goodbye and even Pan, who was a bad-tempered sod took this action with kindness (he often snapped at strangers). Maybe the two men were more gentle because Peter was English or another Westerner was present, but they showed Metta to our dead friend, to a level that was quite beautiful. Beside suicide window at the Wat and the book of the photographic work on the Por Teck Tung by Phillip Blenkinsop, 'The Cars That Ate Bangkok', it was easy to get a glib idea of their work. The way they acted on that morning when Sleazy passed was exemplary, albeit a little gruff and down to earth, but at no time did they not respect the remains of the dead or the people present. There is a tendency for the Thai folk to laugh at something outside their understanding or when confronted with something embarrassing or shocking, which is just their way, it is cultural. Laughing is their default position.

As they have become more accustomed to the sensitivities of Westerners about death, these attitudes are changing and now many of the images of horrific accidents posted online are pixelated a little. They are not used to the Western horror of death and find that as odd as the foreigners view of their apparent callousness. For Thai people, it is just as sad to say goodbye to a friend or loved one, but they see it as the end of one journey and the start of another. They wish them well on their next journey, and they often hope to meet them in the next life to be friends or lovers once more.

If that is not a beautiful sentiment, nothing is.

The Building of Magical Ability

The activity to attain the ability to construct a magical item or to use what is termed as magic to influence others is primarily through sharply focussed intention or as the Thais term it, *Samathi* (pronounced Sa-Ma-Tee). The state of focus is a factor in all forms of magic, and through that, various sources of power become available. Samathi is an innate ability in some individuals, which can then be enhanced through rigorous training in many if not all of the practices discussed in the following section. When gaining a controlled, focussed and calm mind, further magical power can then be sought through the harnessing of a spirit such as a stillborn child or person who has died a violent death, as a spirit familiar that aids the performance of magical tasks. Another branch of magic consists of the training in the direct manipulation of objects from the intended victim of their actions, such as sperm, hair, body fluid, fingernails and even clothing. And lastly, magic can be created through the utterance of spells, although in general, it is a combination of some, if not all of these elements, and Samathi is essential for each of these available sources ¹.

The practices within Buddhism that are used in the pursuit to the attainment of enlightenment in this lifetime can also bestow various magical abilities. The Buddha rejected the practice of magic as a distraction, but many see these abilities as a useful tool to gain merit by helping their followers with the mundane problems of life. The earliest reference to this aspect came from one of the close disciples of the Buddha himself, Maha Moggallana, who seems to have been a fascinating character, endowed as he was with the most amazing supernatural powers. Being dedicated to his practices, Maha Moggallana went to the forests near the village of Kallavalaputta in Magadha (India) and tried to practice meditation with great zeal. However, due to exhaustion, he was often overcome by sleep and his mind would not settle enough to attain the correct meditative states. The Buddha aided his disciple by guiding him through a shared supernatural vision, enabling him to complete his spiritual mission in an incredibly short space of time. Thus Maha Moggallana attained all the Jhanas within one week, to become an Arahant or Buddhist saint. (Jhanas are the eight states of consciousness which are produced from meditative practices that are closely related to Samathi itself)

Moggallana's mind-reading powers enabled him to penetrate his students' minds to give them specific advice that related to their quest, accelerating their growth and with that, mirroring what the Buddha had done for him. Various Suttas in the Tipitaka give us a glimpse of the range of the powers he possessed:

1. Telepathy - the ability to know the thoughts of others.
2. Clairaudience - the ability to hear across long distances.
3. Clairvoyance - the ability to see the imperceptible.

4. Astral Travel - the ability to travel to celestial realms.
5. Telekinesis - the ability to move items from a distance.

There are accounts of these abilities being present to varying degrees in most of the famous monks and Ajarns of Thailand, and their presence is perceived both as a boon to their followers and evidence of a heightened state of being. Possessing magical abilities is also seen as a gauge of that persons' dedication to their studies as well as their moral goodness, and many of the Luang Phors and some Ajarns exemplify the quality of Metta (loving-kindness). Concerning the Thai Occult, as an Ajarn raises in his abilities through dedicated practice, he also exudes a natural attraction to those around him, gaining followers of his works and devotees alike. For those practitioners with an innate ability with these arts, it is often seen as a natural calling, raising the prospect of a practitioner being the rebirth of a magician. Many Ajarns come from a familial lineage of sorcerers and have had the dedication to follow the magical path, often at the expense of extensive formal education. The latter comment in no way reflects on their intelligence, as the study of Saiyasart magic requires the use of numerous written scripts and an encyclopaedic knowledge of spells, rituals, plants, woods and kata.

In this section, the aim is to get the opinions of some Ajarns to the many questions that have been raised by Western practitioners since the opening of The Thai Occult to outside scrutiny. This will include their advice on the practices used to gain Samathi, and the methods that are important when working with the occult talismans they produce. Most of the systems outlined in this section are pure Theravada Buddhist in nature, but as with many aspects of The Thai Occult, these practices are also a vital component of Saiyasart Wicha. Contained here are descriptions of the techniques used to build Samathi. Having Samathi is essential to raise the powers of the individual, but to go any further, a teacher must be found and a period as a Luksit must be undertaken. The Ajarns consider Saiyasart impossible to study without a Master because the system is an oral tradition, and each student needs an accomplished guide to be made fully aware of the use of spells, training techniques, scripts and rituals. Some Ajarns have stressed that it is entirely possible for a foreigner to become accomplished in The Thai Occult 2 and this book may constitute the start of a journey for a few of the readers of this work.

Gaining Samathi

It is not the purpose of this book to fully outline the practices involved in meditation as there are a considerable number of opportunities to explore this practice, and there are thousands of books on the subject already. Instead, here is some advice from one of the best-written examples of the difficulties in the process of attaining Samathi from the book by Richard Randall - *Life As A Siamese Monk*, published in 1990, which is highly

recommended and still readily available. He studied Vipassana meditation (insight meditation) at a famous temple called Wat Paknam and had been given exercises to help withdraw the mind from the world of the senses; to turn it within himself. His journey started with the following instruction:-

The theory states that first, it is important to sit comfortably in a position, which can be held for hours if necessary and then fold the hands in the lap. The right hand should be on top of the left, with the index finger of the right hand touching the thumb of the left. Close the eyes and try to concentrate the mind to achieve the opening of the right nostril. Then repeat the words Samma Arahant three times. Next, focus the mind at the inside corner of the right eye and repeat the words as before. Next, try to concentrate all the attention in the centre of the skull and then the back of the mouth and then to the bottom of the throat. Then right down to the navel and finally, at a position two fingers breadth below the navel. At each of these positions, repeat the words Samma Arahant three times, but when finally at the last place the devotee should keep on repeating the phrase. If the mind wanders at this point, go straight back to the final position, do not go through all the positions again. If this practice is successful, a devotee will be conscious of a pinpoint of light, seen as if in the mind's eye.

Having managed to get comfortably seated, squatting on the floor, Richard closed his eyes and tried to fix his whole attention in the opening of the nostril, and failed. He tried again and again, but could not do it. He tried to help himself by visualising the nostril, but no sooner had he arrived at a mental picture of the nostril he found it fading and the mind being drawn to some sound or other. He became aware of innumerable sounds, which he had not heard before and the more he struggled to attain even the slightest degree of concentration on the nasal area, the more he became conscious of some sensory stimulation. His mind wandered everywhere but where he wanted it to be. He remembered feeling that he was just on the point of success when he heard what he took to be a riverboat in the distance. He was immediately caught up in a mental game of conjecturing how far away it was and what type of boat it was, becoming so involved that he was not even aware of the point when he left that mental playground. The next time he caught himself he was going through the act of boarding a number nine bus in Piccadilly Circus.

Again he tried to clear the mind to bring himself back to the task in hand, only to become conscious of the pain in the legs. Richard determined that he would not move until attaining some semblance of concentration. Then he became painfully aware of being bitten by what felt like hordes of mosquitos. Try as he might he could not put the thought of mosquitos out of mind. He thought that his hands and feet must by now be swollen beyond recognition! Grasping at this excuse, he got up from the floor and as it was not yet daylight he lit a candle to see how severe the damage was. There was but one bite, and it was amazingly small, considering that he had inadvertently left both windows open during the night.

By this time, Richard had become furious with himself as he had always prided myself upon his powers of concentration and will. Sitting again on the floor and calling himself a long string of uncomplimentary names in the process, he applied his mind to the exercise once more and progressed very well, as he thought, when he heard a knocking at the door. He opened his eyes and found that he was lying on his side on the floor, having been fast asleep.

Opening the door, Richard saw that a table had been laid with his breakfast. He went over to it and sat down, pouring out a large cup of coffee he began to drink. For a moment he closed his eyes and was immediately conscious of a clear mental picture of his right nostril. As the fact that he had attained this small degree of success came, the whole experience was gone.

Over the next two weeks, it dawned on him that the times when he had the best success were when the mind appeared to have tired itself out and could not find anything else to titillate itself with. It would then fall back into the meditation exercise. In this way, he learned not to be upset when the mind darted from one thing to another in rapid succession, and would tell himself that this is but the nature of the brain. It argued back and forth about the need for the words or the exercise, somehow determined by conflict, doubt and scepticism.

This remarkable man tells an honest story about how he broke through his problems to become one of the first English people to be ordained as a monk in Thailand. It is a thoughtful and funny book.

1. Watson & Ellen - *Understanding Witchcraft and Sorcery in SE Asia* - 1993 p10

2. Ajarn Korn, Ajarn Chalerm and Ajarn Dang to name but three.

It does not matter how strong or good is the magic from any tattoo or amulet that you may possess; if you are not a good person, these things will not help you. When you have an amulet or a tattoo you should keep precepts and say the kata with the aim of improving yourself.

Ajarn Suea,

January 2018.

On numerous occasions, Ajarns and monks have expressed the belief that there are many ways to attain Samathi. One of the great meditation Masters of the recent age was Ajarn Man (or Luang Pu Man, who was a member of the Tammayut sect of Theravada monks), renowned for the practice of Tudong. Although this practice is now less common, it is worth explaining as an example of the many methods available in the pursuit of gaining Samathi as it had a profound effect on the magic of Thailand.



26. Ajarn Suea in Samathi.



27. Ajarn Perm Rung in Samathi.

Tudong - A 'shaking off' of mental defilements, derived from a Pali word meaning 'ascetic practices'.

This section draws heavily from two influential books on the subject, the biography of the legendary Ajarn Man by his pupil, Ajarn Maha Bua (2004) and *Forest Recollections* by Kamala Tiyanavich (1997). Both of these publications are highly recommended.

Buddhism has flourished in Asia by accommodating the native beliefs of the cultures with which it came into contact. The styles of Buddhist philosophy practised in the area that is now called Thailand was as varied as the Buddhism in Tibet, coloured and enriched by its interactions with the indigenous cultural traditions in each region. In the early nineteenth century, Thailand had not yet become a centralised country, instead consisting of smaller states that sent tribute to the more powerful kingdom, which acted as a protector rather than the controller of religious customs and practices. Substantially different Buddhist systems existed in the different regions, for example, in the Lanna Kingdom to the North there were 18 lineages in the city of Chiang Mai alone. This aspect was similar in all the regions, and each of these Buddhist traditions was infused with the various forms of indigenous spirit worship and by the Mahayana and Tantric traditions that flourished before the fourteenth century.

A reform movement sprang up within Buddhism in the third decade of the nineteenth century, the founder of which was a 33-year-old Siamese Prince named Mongkut, who had been impressed by the strict discipline observed at a Mon (Burmese) Monastery. Mongkut set up a new sect that would follow this discipline, which he named Tammayut, meaning the order adhering to The Dharma. He introduced a style of the monastic robe that covered both shoulders, (a Mon tradition) and strict adherence to Pali Buddhist studies, revised rituals and routines and new religious days to observe. This was an invention of the Bangkok elite that disdained the folk stories and parables that were used to teach the Dharma, as well as how local culture had been integrated into the Buddhist philosophy. Mongkut had an intellectual image of Buddhism, and he accepted the view of the Christian missionaries at that time that Buddhism was too superstitious. The eventual popularity of this sect helped cement the formation of the modern Thai State by spreading the idea of one language for Buddhism, one Buddhism to override local traditions and all told in the Thai language. The process of reform is still occurring to this day, but traditions are strong and the old ways linger.

During the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth, it was customary for young men to ordain in their local traditions to learn the Dharma and acquire the practical knowledge that was relevant to rural communities. Those who were committed remained in the robes, but many young men left after a period to become householders. Some of the monks followed another path, that of a lifelong monastic who wandered in the wilds

for several decades on a spiritual quest. Many monks found this discipline too difficult as it was an austere life in the wilds, in which hardship and suffering lead to self-knowledge. The first great monk to follow this tradition came from Ubon (of Lao descent, as are most people in Isaan), the legendary Ajarn Man, who found the Tammayut methods conducive to his meditative inclination after first being ordained into a Lao sect.

At this time, the North and North-East of Thailand were sparsely populated, roads were few and vast areas covered with forests that were home to elephants, tigers, leopards, panthers, bears and snakes. Animals ruled not only the wilderness but also in the fears and fantasies that dwelled in everyone's imagination, monk and villager alike. Ajarn Man dictated that until a monk faces these dangers, he will not know how much or how little he fears them. Many people were terrified of ghosts and spirits, but if someone wanted to live the life of a Tudong monk these fears had to be rooted out. Advancing along the path of Dharma meant developing the mind and staying in the wild was a proven method for reducing, and eventually eliminating this defilement. The thick forest and the cemeteries were training grounds for the Tudong monk to battle the destructive forces within, with the aim of spiritual liberation.

Samathi is a gathering of the mind's energies to give it great strength and the ability to uproot attachments, cleansing it so that it is, for the moment, bright and clear. In the early part of the training, a novice stayed with his teacher, participated in the daily rituals, received instruction and learned by observing. In the wilds, a student had to be ever cautious of dangers, which forced him to be alert, defenceless except for his mind. If fear was defeated, an inner peace could be found, but if fear were the victor, it would multiply itself prodigiously. In the second stage of training, a monk wondered with other monks and practised their methods of meditation, attuning their senses to the environment. They had to get used to the dangers of the forest, which included tigers, who often came close at night. The presence of Tigers forced the monk to try and hold his meditative state and banish the fear within, resigned to his karma if the Tiger should attack. These situations challenged the mind, and Ajarn Man taught that if you are terrified of tigers, be where the Tigers are and make friends with them, a parable for all aspects of fear. Ajarn Man was a spiritual warrior who's meditation practices instilled a mental fortitude that was used to combat the hardships and dangers they faced each day.

Even when wandering alone in the forests, the confidence of the Tudong monks was striking. They wholeheartedly believed that due to the merit of the practice, the Dharma would protect them. They had trust in their Ajarn and believed in the good they had done by not harming any creature. The Tudong monks also believed that many dangerous animals were guardian spirits in disguise that had come to test their faith and with discipline, they could overcome such situations and survive.

Another important Tudong practice was that of staying in a charnel ground. In the past, cemeteries in Thailand were not like they are today. Unburied bodies were all over the place, old corpses and new scattered like logs and it gave the monks a chance to have an encounter with both ghosts and the local spirits. The experienced monks often sought the places avoided by others so they could practice meditation undisturbed and for many monks who were afraid of ghosts, the experience was often transformative. The bodies were carried to the grounds on a bamboo bed and to overcome their fear, Tudong monks often chose these beds as a place to rest for the night. During these periods, the monks had the chance to view their fears and begin the process of uprooting the cause, understanding the fear of death and the realms of ghosts and spirits. They would meditate on the rotting corpses to know that they too would rot one day, it is an aspect of everyone's life so why be afraid? In these, like all the circumstances where fear rises, the monks have the chance to gain wisdom and learn to face his fears with mindfulness. Eventually, he will be transformed, having no fear at all.

Through his training, Ajarn Man possessed the ability to communicate directly with beings from many different realms of existence. He was continually in contact with beings in the higher and lower celestial realms, spirits of the terrestrial realms, ghosts of many sorts and even the denizens of hell through inner psychic faculties. This training included a period where Ajarn Man used the image of a bloated, seeping corpse that he contemplated on at all times until it changed into a translucent disc that appeared suspended before him. As he focussed on the disc it changed constantly and he followed these changes for three months, with a seemingly endless series of developing images, permanently in flux. Ajarn Man continued to practice Samathi in this way but eventually realised that he was not attaining the beneficial results of calmness and peace to convince him that this was the correct method, so he changed it. Instead of traveling with the mind he brought in inside and focussed on his own body, investigating every part and bringing everything within. With practice, his mind calmed and he achieved the Samathi he sought, his body appearing to be separate from himself and he had found his way. As one of the foremost meditation Masters Thailand has ever produced, his insights into meditation have influenced every generation since, and his following continues to this day.

Ajarn Man possessed a mastery of psychic skills, and over the years his proficiency grew to the point where the monks living with him took great care to be mentally self-controlled at all times. They couldn't let their minds wander lest their wanderings became the subject of a Dharma talk that evening and had to hold extreme focus when meeting him as he made an issue of any stray thoughts. It became the subject of much joy with his disciples, always on the lookout as to 'who got caught today?'

The students of Ajarn Man continued his teachings after he passed away, giving rise to such remarkable monks as Luang Phor Pina and what can be

termed as the great generation of magical monks, almost all of which have now passed away. Although the tradition of wandering meditation ascetics has become a victim of Thailand's relentless modernisation and rampant deforestation, Tudong can still be undertaken in the more remote parts of the country. A period of Tudong is still part of the training for some monks, Ajarns and Lersi who observe at least some of the 13 ascetic practices mentioned in the Buddhas discourses. These include eating only one meal per day, sleeping outdoors in a forest or cemetery and being content with the very fewest possessions. This ascetic life tests their skills and offers the chance to hone the piercing focus that comes with such practices, which can then be put to use with any aspect of the Thai Occult system.

One common question since the release of the first books on The Thai Occult is, What are the feelings associated with the practice of attaining Samathi? What are we looking for? What is the state of being?

The feeling that a practitioner is seeking with Samathi is that of the spirit growing and filling the whole body. It is light and bright and should bring about a calm but sharp focus, without the constant mind chatter that many experience in daily life.

Ajarn Nahn Ting 2018.

The 32 Parts Of The Body Meditation and the 4 Elements

As was mentioned in the previous piece on the influence of Ajarn Man, one of the significant aspects of the meditation techniques undertaken in Thailand is the exploration of the body, with the aim being to build Samathi and an understanding of impermanence. That's the Buddhist aspect of the 32 parts of the body meditation but as with many practices here, it also has an occult usage, which will be covered with an interview with Ajarn Apichai following a brief description of this style of meditation. As with all practices, a teacher is essential to explore this properly. This passage on this style of meditation is a rough guide, but hopefully one that will encourage people to explore the techniques involved with an expert teacher.

The 32 parts of the body meditation practices aid an understanding of the true nature of the body, to begin the comprehension that the body consists of the four elements of earth, water, air and fire. The use of the four elements within the Thai Occult will also be covered in the interview with Ajarn Apichai, but only to a depth that Ajarn is willing to share. This aspect is new to the outside world, and few would cover it in any depth as it is generally only to spoken of with a Luksit or a fellow Ajarn.

Practising the 32 parts of the body meditation can help build immense levels of focus as well as increase the potential for self-healing. The idea of

this practice is that the devotee will use their Samathi to discover their own body, every single component of it. When a person 'thinks' in the body, blood goes there, and through the expansion and prolonged efficiency of the blood supply, robust health can be attained. Tai Chi Chuan also uses this principle to good effect, and it is the reverse of the ageing process, which generally constricts the blood supply in the body as a person curls up and withers with age, like an old piece of orange peel. The practice also helps the devotee discover that there is no self, it is just a body with all its frailties, and the levels of sensitivity attained can be astonishing.

Outlined here is a rough guide as to how to use the 32 parts of the body in daily meditative practices, but not for every part as it would take too long. A good teacher is essential. Find one. The reader is holding a book on The Thai Occult, not a meditation book and a teacher is needed for this practice. The 32 parts are listed below and let's take the example of the first part, the hair on the head to give an idea as to what the practice involves.

Put full attention into the hairs on the head. Each can have different colours, brown, grey, maybe black or dyed. Become aware of the shape of the hairs, and where they are on the head. Some are short, some long, and they can go in different directions. How each hair protrudes from the top of the head, where they start above the face and finish on the neck. How each is a thread like an outgrowth of flexible shafts of hardened cells. The average skull has about 100,000 hairs, and it is important to envisage them all.

The practice of the full 32 parts should take about 30 minutes, to begin with, but it can also be used when outside the house, on a walk or at any time when the need arises for a meditative state. As the practice develops, some of the parts of the body begin to break down into the primary elements of solidity, liquidity, motion and temperature to reveal the impersonal nature of the body and mind. This idea expresses the link between this and the use of the four elements in The Thai Occult practices.

The 32 parts of the body are:-

- 1 - The hair on the head.
- 2 - The hair on the body.
- 3 - The nails.
- 4 - Teeth.
- 5 - Skin
- 6 - Muscles.
- 7 - Tendons.
- 8 - Bones.
- 9 - Bone marrow.
- 10 - Spleen.
- 11 - Heart.
- 12 - Liver.
- 13 - Diaphragm.

- 14 - Kidney.
- 15 - Lungs.
- 16 - Intestines.
- 17 - Colon.
- 18 - New food in the stomach.
- 19 - Old food in the stomach.
- 20 - Brain.
- 21 - Bile.
- 22 - Phlegm
- 23 - Puss.
- 24 - Blood.
- 25 - Sweat.
- 26 - Condensed Fat.
- 27 - Liquid Fat.
- 28 - Tears.
- 29 - Saliva.
- 30 - Snot.
- 31 - The liquid in the joints.
- 32 - Urine.

(These are often written in slightly different ways depending on the source materials)

The use of the 32 Parts of the Body Meditation and the 4 Elements in The Thai Occult - an interview with Ajarn Apichai

Knowledge of the 32 parts of body is fundamental when creating the entity contained in a talisman. The Thai Ajarns, through their knowledge and the understanding of the 32 parts have worked out a way to construct a spirit, very much like reversing the study of the 32 parts within themselves. It is the first thing studied in the process of making talismans and the 32 parts of body can be divided into sections depending on which of the 4 elements they are associated with. If an Ajarn has knowledge and a good ability regarding the use of the four elements, then it is sometimes not necessary to do the 32 parts of body. The four elements are Na Ma Pa Ta or earth, water, wind and fire if said in the Western way. This knowledge and practice is used in making amulets, combining the 4 elements with the 32 parts of body. Here's the groupings:

The earth element has 20 parts

- 1 - The hair on the head.
- 2 - The hair on the body.
- 3 - The nails.
- 4 - Teeth.
- 5 - Skin
- 6 - Muscles.
- 7 - Tendons.

- 8 - Bones.
- 9 - Bone marrow.
- 10 - Spleen.
- 11 - Heart.
- 12 - Liver.
- 13 - Diaphragm.
- 14 - Kidney.
- 15 - Lungs.
- 16 - Intestines.
- 17 - Colon.
- 18 - New food in the stomach.
- 19 - Old food in the stomach.
- 20 - Brain.

The water element has 12 parts

- 1 - Bile.
- 2 - Phlegm
- 3 - Puss.
- 4 - Blood.
- 5 - Sweat.
- 6 - Condensed Fat.
- 7 - Liquid Fat.
- 8 - Tears.
- 9 - Saliva.
- 10 - Snot.
- 11 - The liquid in the joints.
- 12 - Urine.

The fire element has 4 parts (all very metaphorical)

- 1 - Fire that warms the body.
- 2 - Fire to burn.
- 3 - A living fire that makes you old.
- 4 - The fire to digest the food.

The Wind has 6 parts

- 1 - The wind that blows above.
- 2 - The wind that blows below.
- 3 - The wind that circulates around the stomach.
- 4 - The wind that circulates inside the stomach.
- 5 - The wind that circulates around the whole body.
- 6 - The wind of the breath.

So in effect, there are 42 parts of the body, but ten parts are not tangible and are therefore not counted, but they are essential in the construction of a new spiritual entity. It needs highly focussed concentration and mental power to combine the four elements to create amulets. The knowledge of Kata and the Wicha were passed down from his master who has now



*28. Correct training and good knowledge brings magical ability.
Ajarn Apichai.*



29. Ajarn Apichai blessing Panneng.

passed away. When constructing an amulet, it will have enough power with the ingredients that are present, but it can be more powerful if the 32 parts of body are also combined within the amulet.

Everything is created by a combination of the four elements. A human being is considered to consist of these four elements; breath is the wind, blood is the water and flesh is the earth, etc. Na is the water element, Ma is the earth element, Pa is the fire element, and Ta is air and to combine these, elemental Kata can be used to assist in raising the power of the amulet when making it. The water element is used for Metta because water is the coolness, the ease, the comfort. If an Ajarn wants to add Maha Saneah, it will need the wind element to help to pass the power to the person and carry the message of attraction. The earth element is vital for Kong Grapan or invincibility magic. Combining the earth and water element helps with protection, like if the fire was the danger, water is there to put it out. If need protection from black magic, the fire element is used to burn away the magic.

The four elements are an essential knowledge when creating most amulets and they are part of the building of the talisman with kata. If the Ajarn then combines the use of the four elements with the 32 parts of the body, that's when the amulet can become very powerful indeed.

No one else would give that interview! Ajarn Apichai has a natural openness that is quite disarming, speaking the words as if the knowledge they contain is as normal as when talking about eating or sleeping.

Thank you for this interview, Ajarn.

The Power of Sound

One of the aspects of The Thai Occult practices that help in attaining Samathi is the kata given by each maker for any of their talismans. Some Ajarn's use only one kata for everything produced at their Samnak, whereas others create a different kata for each type of talisman. Let's now look at Kata by reproducing a piece in the first book on The Thai Occult and then talk to a monk about the way kata are used by the devotee, what their purpose is and any advice that he can offer with their use.

Kata

In 1984, a Delhi publication house brought out an English translation of Mahidara's Mantramahodadhi, a treatise on Mantra and at the beginning of the publication a 'warning' was given in which they disclaimed responsibility for any consequences if the mantra within were used irresponsibly.

If any person, on the basis of any information provided in this book commits any nefarious acts, the author and publisher will not be responsible in any way. Mantras are practised and used for the help of and services to Mankind and should not be abused in any way. 1

A Mantra is a sacred utterance using words in Sanskrit that are believed to have psychological and spiritual powers 2, and the practice of this principle has spread into many other forms of worship, from Buddhism to Taoism. A Gatha is a Sanskrit term for song or verse, and this term has been accepted into Buddhist practices as a verse recited in rhythm with the breath 3. In Thailand, the word has developed into kata, and they form the principle method of worship for the general Buddhist practices, and all aspects of The Thai Occult. Repetitions of Kata are an accepted fact for the collectors of Thai Occult items, but few katas have been translated to give an idea as to what is being said in a way that can be understood.

In Thailand, the power of kata is considered real. In the legend of Khun Paen, it is written on numerous occasions that he uses a 'Sakot' kata to immobilise, suppressing or restraining anyone within earshot 4. Kata are analogous to the action of prayer in the West, but prayers are not prone to actively create what can be considered as magic. Kata are a tool of human intentionality, and therefore it is the power of the Samathi that renders the kata powerful. The Samathi that must be built to gain magical abilities 5.

Thai kata generally originate from the Pali Canon, the Tipitaka (the standard collection of The Buddha's writing in the Theravada Buddhist tradition in the Pali language) but over time many kata words have been bastardised, or words included from the Lanna language (Northern Thailand), Laotian or even Khmer. Because of the various languages, Kata can be difficult to decipher, and the language used needs to be taken back to the Pali to be able to be translated correctly into a form non-Thai speakers can understand. When the words do not originate from the Pali Canon, the kata is referred to as a 'dirty kata' and it is then believed to evoke darker powers.

When people first start devotions to Thai Occult items, they often find the kata difficult to pronounce and say with conviction, but it is important to keep trying and a recording of the kata from the maker or the dealer it came from helps. If the kata is not being spoken correctly, how can the resident spirit or the deity in question understand? It can also be helpful to some people to have an idea of what the kata means, and the following Hoon Payon kata is famous here in Thailand.

Kata Hoon Payon (Luang Phor Naen Kampiro Lineage)

*Om Na Ma Pa Ta Jaedta Phuudto Maha Phuudtang Hun Payondtang
Nimiddtang Gang Ruubpang Bpiyang Ma Ma Aehi Aehi Na Mo Put Taa Yaa*
(chant 7 Times)

The translation for the kata may come as a surprise considering the Hoon Payon is an ancient Animist deity associated with the land that can contain Prai materials, such as bone, skin, corpse hair and Nam Man Prai oils. These are the meanings from the Pali used, and where that has been changed through time into Thai, it has been taken back to the original Pali before translation.

Om - Awakening the Universe through the resonance of sound.

Na Ma Pa Ta - The four elements.

Jaedta - To be born

Phuudto - Buddha the being

Maha Phuudtang - The Great Buddha

Hoon Payontang - The servant

Nimidtang Gang - The sign or omen that proceeds

Ruubpang - That figure, image or object of the eye

Bpiyang - Dear beloved or desired object

Ma Ma - Come

Aehi Aehi - Come here, hey! Calling for attention!

Na Mo Put Taa Yaa - In the name of the 5 Dhiyana Buddhas of this eon.

The Hoon Payon Kata has a mixture of Brahman and Buddhist influences due to the presence of Om, and begins by evoking the four elements together before sending requests the great one, The Buddha to stay with the bearer. Hoon Payon is a Thai word but adding the 'tang' means that it calls the Hoon Payon to come, it is a calling spell, to come, come, come and help. It ends with reverence to the five Buddhas, or the spirit of the Buddha as back up or protection in case the Hoon Payon attacks the bearer. It is often the case that the kata has a backup plan, just in case something goes awry, although that would be very unusual for such a stable entity as the Hoon Payon.

Strictly speaking, with being Buddhist, the bearer should not play around with spiritual items such as this and this kata infers that yes, the bearer is making a small mistake here, but is asking in the name of The Buddha to stay with the bearer while seeking help for a problem. The same is true when the devotee is asked to perform the Namo Dtassa chant to the Buddha before saying a kata to any Prai items. It is said to seek refuge with The Buddha, protection from what the devotee is about to beseech for help. It may come as a surprise to most reading this that the Thai Occult items and their associated kata are so firmly rooted in Buddhism, but that is generally the case as Buddhism is the refuge from any possible harm from the forces being called upon. 6

1. Harvey Alper - *Understanding Mantra* p1

2. Wikipedia definition

3. ditto

4. C Baker *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p282

5. Harvey Alper - *Understanding Mantra* p6

6. The explanation of the meaning of kata comes from an interview with Ajarn Metta, June 2016.

Ajarn Tay

Ajarn Tay is a hard working monk in the Chiang Mai region, and on arriving at the temple the first thing to notice is that there are lots of people around as this Wat is the centre of the local community in a traditional way. The hall is full of locals making devotions for a Buddha day, and there were many younger monks who were all orphaned hill tribe people from the Mae Hong Son area. At that time, they were helping out with a new building and soon, they will start work on expanding the Wat further. Ajarn Tay has enabled all of this work. He raised the money to buy the five rai of land (about 4 acres) needed to officially register the Wat from the donations it receives, which are also used to help many of the locals with education. The work involved in creating this expression of his devotion and compassion is remarkable, and his manner while achieving this feat is something to be respected.

The renowned old magician, Phor Noi Tan helped raise Ajarn Tay as a boy, and Ajarn was a student of both Phor Noi and of the legendary Phor Sala Tan, some thoughts on whom he shared at the end of the interview. The primary aim of this interview was to request the advice of Ajarn Tay on kata, Samathi and helping Westerners understand some of the issues around starting to acquire products from The Thai Occult.

An Interview with Ajarn Tay - July, 2017 Bringing a new amulet or statue to the home

The actions a person needs to take regarding what to do when they receive a talisman from a maker depends on the maker involved, what the rules are pertaining to that piece and the purpose of the amulet. With amulets made by Ajarn Tay, the first thing to do is for the owner to tell their Opatika (their guardian spirit) that a new spirit has come to the home. Every single human being has an Opatika that takes care of them, and in the aggressive forms of Thai magic, this spirit is what an Ajarn will try to weaken to influence that person with any particular spell. Knowing the birthday of an intended target is essential with that type of magic as the Ajarn can then work out the day when their Opatika is at a low ebb.

If the devotee has a spirit house, which holds the land spirits on which their residence is located, it also needs informing, which they can do with their mind. If there is another altar of any type from any style of practice in the home, then that should be informed as well as any Buddha present that a new spirit has come to stay. Sometimes, a maker will also give a welcoming kata, which helps with this process, and is a general kata for such purposes.

Ajarn Tay on Kata

With regard to the offerings and kata, it depends on the owner, and the time available in their life. Everyone offers water, usually every day but as long



30. The remarkable Ajarn Tay.



31. Ajarn Tay's Pruk Saek during a Na Naa Thong ritual.

as the water does not run dry in the cup, glass or bowl, it is okay, everyone has a life to live, and Western people always seem very busy. The same goes regarding food; it is at the person's convenience. Flowers and candles tend to be for the Buddha, but the food is for the ghosts and spirits in the talismans, both as sustenance and to help them to feel that they are part of the world of the living. Regarding the kata, if the devotee is a foreigner and they chant the wrong kata, it does affect the amulet. It is akin to damaging the spell by talking gibberish to the resident spirit. If they cannot say kata correctly, they should learn to focus the mind to contact and communicate with the spirit directly. If unsure of the pronunciation of a kata it is better for a foreigner to learn to focus their thoughts, because once the mind is clear, it holds power. Then they can contact the spirit with the mind. If this can be done, the person should simply make their wish instead of chanting kata.

The clearness of the mind is of the utmost importance, and every single kata acts to calm the thinking, which is one of the primary functions of kata. Kata is for this purpose, to help the devotee as much as the resident spirit. Saying kata is the beginning of the process to attain Samathi, and the more kata is practised, the greater the clarity that will come to the mind. Some kata are complicated, which can be a challenge and some are said quickly, easily tripping up the brain but keep practising it till perfect. At first, the mind can get in the way of doing any kata correctly, but that stage can be pushed through with a little effort. Kata have a purpose and they need to be said.

It is better if a Westerner does not know the meaning of the kata.

Ajarn Tay 2017

Ajarn recommends this as many Western minds are not calm, so it is better not to think of the meaning of the kata, only say the kata or the brain will be busy and that is not what is being sought from this practice. It can also be the case that if the meaning of the kata is given, the person may think, 'is that it?', which may result in a loss of faith. Sometimes having too much knowledge about these things leads to a loss of belief, and to make the amulet powerful it is essential to believe. A Thai Occult item has power for a very long time but people often buy new ones as their faith in that amulet wanes with time. Thinking in this way is wrong, but that is sometimes how people are.

As far as the practices to gain Samathi, Ajarn says that Samathi can be achieved in many ways. There's no need to only chant to the Buddha; it can be to Jesus Christ or whatever you believe in. Samathi is built with anything that the devotee can hold on to strongly with their mind, and the practice is constructed to attain focus, it doesn't matter what religion it is from, that is not important. Samathi can also be gained by focussing on the breath, watching the air move in and out, and in Buddhist practices one aspect is to focus on the nostrils, to feel the breath there. The human mind is like a monkey's and the 'monkey mind' never stays in one place. To acquire

Samathi is to focus the mind on to an object or to focus on the self, to know how existence is, to be conscious and aware of the thoughts. It depends on the person who is trying to find a way to be focused and attain Samathi, which can be compared to catching and taming that monkey, but it is always trying to find a way to escape and be free to do whatever it wants.

Using Kata - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

As the topic has turned to the importance of kata, this is a good point to ask Ajarn Perm Rung to about a common question, is it possible to cut down on saying kata if a devotee has a lot of amulets and statues?

With all of his amulets, Ajarn Perm Rung fixes a kata into the amulet during the process of construction. This means that with some charms, a person only needs to carry it to receive the benefit of the magic within it, such as Metta and Saneah. With some amulets, it is essential to say the kata if a wish needs to be granted. With others, reciting the kata is not as important, but the kata still needs to be remembered and pronounced correctly for when the devotee has a special request. Some amulets contain Prai, they have a spirit, and the kata is the way to call them to service. The kata is a way to communicate with them. It is like a language, and if it is not spoken correctly, it can be misunderstood; resulting in the fact that the spirit does not know what is required of them, or how to help.

As far as trying to cut down on the amount of kata said, if it is a Puttakhun amulet it is OK to use Namotassa and say it three times, because most amulets of this type do not have a kata anyway. If an amulet has a spirit held within by the Prai materials, it will have a kata. With Prai, it is essential to know all the kata for the amulets on the altar as each maker uses a different Wichai. The kata can be said every day, time permitting or the kata can be said whenever the amulet is called upon for a service. Either way, the kata has to be fixed in the brain, said clearly and pronounced correctly.

Ajarn Tay on Backlash

Backlash refers to a period where there is a general crash of good fortune, which can happen to the devotees of The Thai Occult as well as to Ajarns. It comes from having broken the rules of practice, or having acquired an item from a Master who produced something extremely powerful but did not have sufficient skills to control it. Once such an item is in the possession of a person who does not have enough power to control it, things can go wrong. If a person worships lots of Prai, this process can occur and the best way to stop it is with a Sompoi bath, which is regarded as spiritual first aid. Sompoi comes from a tree and when soaked in water, bathing in it removes any clinging or powerful spirits from the body, and its use is recommended. After the bath, return to the strict rules of practice and make Tamboon; then donate the merit from that to the spirits in the home.

Tamboon is an act that gains merit (the most basic of which is giving to charity or a temple, but it can also be through helping others directly) and donating the merit from any Tamboon performed to the spirits on the altar keeps a balance. The Prai in talismans survives on Tamboon more than they do the offerings, as it charges and empowers them. When having Prai items, not all of the ghosts will be loyal to their 'owner' as they have been forced to be present in the talisman, but making merit can bring the spirits closer and persuade them to have a better relationship, just like making friends. Merit can also be made through meditation and spreading loving kindness to all living beings, known in Thai as Pae Metta Bhavana, but a good teacher is needed to study this. On a simpler level, once Samathi is present within a person and has worked at starting to calm the mind, the ability to choose a beneficial action arises in any situation. When watching and listening to a monk, it is an education in the way the monk chooses the way of kindness, bringing Metta to all and through that, Tamboon to himself.

(If when on holiday or living in Thailand, it is easy to see people making this choice all the time)

Tamboon

Tamboon means to 'make boon' to make good things and it can be done in many ways. The simplest way is through kindness to others. Where this kindness is chosen and the person being kind comprehends the choices available fully, then that is an action that makes merit through tamboon. An action such as this can be done by anyone as it does not involve an offering or a donation, meaning that everyone can tamboon.

There are many ways to tamboon but the one that is the most common for foreigners is to donate to charity, or help someone with either money or something given freely. The help can be the gift of time where help is given, or the gift of an item that is no longer required. If making merit through the gift of money, a gift to help a single person is the best, which is why many people buy coffins for the poor. Making a donation to a temple or giving food to monks in the morning also generates merit and then this merit can be given through the mind to both spirits and deities on the altar of a devotee of The Thai Occult.

An opportunity to tamboon came through Ajarn Khaw, who had been asked to raise some money by Kruba Insom to help with the funeral of an important monk, Phra Kru Winitisiriwat. The friends of The Thai Occult Books were very generous and 18,000 baht was raised to help with the costs, which is a large amount to tamboon! Over the coming pages is the story of the funeral, which was about 3 hours away, near to the border of Burma and it was quite an adventure. There were hundreds of people needing to be fed and both Ajarn Khaw and Kruba Insom were great hosts. Being invited to the funeral of a monk is rare, and hopefully, the coming photographs tell the story well.



32. The coffin of Phra Kru Winitisiriwat is in the tower, which has been built by hand.



33. Then three ropes were attached, two on either side for his devotees and the one in the middle for the monks to hold, giving their energy to the spirit of Phra Kru.



34. The amazing thing then was that the hundreds of people present started pulling the tower! It was built on the trunks of coconut trees and easily slid along the floor.



35. While being pulled, (and here, turning a corner!), the man on the structure was throwing sweets for everyone to catch, bringing a joy that was very Thai.



36. The hundreds of people present helped in taking a monk they respected to be cremated.



37. My thanks to Ajarn Khaw for both the chance to tamboon and the experience of being at Phra Kru's funeral.



38. As the sun set, the mournful funeral music began and a Thai dancer performed for the spirit of Phra Kru. Kruba Insom was also talking to help the spirit pass on.



39. Then some fantastic fireworks...



40. The flame was delivered to the pyre by the figure of an angel on a wire. The fire was intense and after this photograph, there came the long drive home.

Death Meditation, Tudong and the 32 parts of the body

An interview with Ajarn Tay

Death meditation is an old practice where a monk would meditate while looking at a corpse rotting, but it is not a common practice any more. In these modern times, the body will be kept in the hospital and injected with formalin to stop decomposition. The purpose of the practice was to enable the monk to accept death as a part of life, and to let go of the fear of dying as fear is the enemy of Samathi.

For the 32 parts of the body meditation, it is essential to have a highly experienced teacher. It is a monk practice that aids the understanding of the body's components, and brings the knowledge that all these parts will rot on death. This meditation practice secures a lack of attachment to this process, dramatically raising the focus and intention within the body of the practitioner. Considering the structure and contents of the body is one of the essential elements in Samathi practices. In the making of an amulet, the ability that comes from the 32 parts of the body meditation helps to create a new spiritual entity (a process called *Ban Juthat*) from the four elements - earth, water, air and fire. The use of the 32 parts of the body meditation and the four elements gives the talisman life, without this it has no power.

The action of Tudong is linked to the Tammayut sect (The Forest Tradition), and it is not a common Northern Thai practice, but in actuality, the Lanna people also perform a kind of Tudong, although only for short periods. Most of Ajarn Tay's training can be termed 'in-house' but in the winter time, a group of monks may go on pilgrimage and stay for a week in a graveyard or a forest. This is to practice the quality of the mind and to Pae Metta Bhavana, bring loving kindness to all beings. When performed in the graveyard, the purpose is to give Metta to the ghosts, but in both places, the hoped result is to focus the mind and uproot attachments.

One aspect that a Westerner should consider with his practices is keeping the 5 precepts (to abstain from harming any living being, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication), which is more of a promise than a rule as they help keep the peace in any society. If a person cannot keep any of these promises, they are not normal so they can choose just a few to begin with, but please remember that sin is part of normal human life. Don't worry too much about mistakes as the precepts are just a control method, so the people in a community don't end up killing each other. The initial stage is to acquire enough Samathi to know themselves and what they are doing.

Monks keep 227 precepts, of which, these are some of the stranger ones:-
No discharging of semen or getting someone to help discharge your semen but if it is a wet dream, it is ok.
No lustful bodily contact with a woman, including kissing or holding hands.
No building a hut without permission.

No having someone else build that hut without permission.
 No requesting sexual favours from a woman, or telling her that she would benefit spiritually from having sex with a monk.
 No rejecting well-grounded criticism.
 A monk cannot keep an extra robe for more than ten days after receiving a new one.
 A monk cannot carry raw wool for more than 48 km.
 No tickling with the fingers.
 No hitching up the robe.
 No shaking the head.
 No walking on tip toe.
 Not to teach Dharma if someone holds an umbrella.

In these modern times, a monk should hold enough respect and faith in the Buddha to be able to choose his precepts. Most of these precepts were made by the Buddha thousands of years ago and society is not the same now. Not keeping to all the 227 precepts does produce a schism between many Buddhists as some prefer to use the rules set by the Buddha, thinking that everything else goes against Buddhist practice. Keeping precepts does not necessarily help with magical practices although having the mental strength to uphold them does indicate that you have good Samathi, and that is essential for the creation of magic. The two aspects can be linked, but in the history of Occult practices, there are records of bad people with magical abilities due to a strong will, a powerful mind, and a secure connection to their Master. For anyone who has amulets, the most important thing to make them useful is to have a sharp mind and good willpower, as well as keeping any promises made to the Ajarn. The rest is a matter of choice.

Phor Sala Tan - an interview with his Luksit, Ajarn Tay

Ajarn Tay was Phor Sala Tan's only true Luksit, while many other Ajarns did learn from him at one time or another, it tended to be for specific Wicha rather than to pass on his full knowledge. Ajarn Tay often uses the name Phor Nahn for his old Master, because the word Nahn indicates a period of time that was spent being a monk. There was much laughter during this interview, and much love expressed, despite how the words may read.

Phor Nahn was a wild person (Ajarn Tay described him as 'so peacock') who was kicked out of a temple as a young man, but no one is exactly sure of the reason for this. During the time as a monk though, when any female devotees came to the temple and blessed water could be used in any way, he usually laced it with Nam Man Prai to win their favours. Phor Nahn was so cheeky and the Prai Wicha he held was very extreme, but actions such as this may account for the acquiring the reputedly over 60 wives in one lifetime. Phor Nahn also loved to do horoscopes and was famous for them, but if a beautiful woman came, the Nam Man Prai was put on them to catch



41. The pot that holds the ashes of Phor Sala Tan and resting beside his remains, two of his Miit Mhor for cutting open bodies.



42. A candid photograph of Ajarn Tay, showing him working on some Rahu Galaa while being interviewed. He rarely stops working.

them, making the girl akin to a sex slave. The use of Nam Man Prai in this way brought the recognition of him being an infamous playboy, and with the same action, the Nam Man Prai brought followers too. Even though Ajarn Tay learned the full Wicha of Phor Nahn there has never been a temptation to use Nam Man Prai in the same way; they are different people with different personalities. The stories around Phor Nahn express the wildness of this famous magician and the extreme nature of the Wicha that was passed on to Ajarn Tay.

There was a local man who sold meat but his business was failing, and he sought Phor Nahn's advice. The old Master recommended the application of Nam Man Prai to all the meat, although at no time was the man informed that if people consume corpse oil, the ghost can eat them from the inside. Later, the man came back with a distended belly and feeling ill, and Phor Nahn just said, 'oh yeah, the ghost is eating' and then set about curing him. During every visit to see his Master, Ajarn Tay never consumed any food or drink, and it was best to keep out of arms reach as well because of the constant use of Nam Man Prai. Ajarn Tay saw Phor Nahn scooping it up in handfuls on many occasions and using it on visitors, later wiping his hands on everything and even picking things up to eat!

His Samnak was in Fang and it was renowned for being made from the wood from coffins, but after Phor Nahn's passing, his last wife dismantled all of it because the spirits went wild. With his death, there was no one to control all the Phi Tai Tang Glom ghosts that he had used through a long life of necromancy. This often happens when strong Ajarns pass away as the spirits in the Samnak are no longer under any sort of control, they go everywhere with impunity and can cause havoc amongst the living.

In the times past, there were no medical services in the remote districts so if a woman in the area was having a problem with giving birth and needed to get the baby out, Phor Nahn would be called upon to operate. The locals appreciated his skill in this matter, but If the child died and was then buried, Phor Nahn would go back and get it to use in talismans. If both the mother and child died, materials would be collected from both of them because that is one of the ultimate sources of Prai, despite the fact that these ghosts can be vicious. Phor Nahn was known to collect Prai of this type by going to the cemetery, getting undressed, crawling in on all fours and digging at the grave with his bare hands. These sources of Prai were incredibly potent, and there are many stories from devotees as to their power.

When Phor Nahn died, the news travelled a little slowly, meaning that at the Samnak, everything concerning the making of talismans had gone by the time Ajarn Tay got there. Other people had taken the belongings and photographs of his Master, and even a guitar made out of a coffin lid, the thought of which brings happy memories to Ajarn of Phor Nahn singing and playing. A few things came to the temple though, which included the hand

shaped pestle that was used to mix Muan Sarn but in the end, it had to be donated to the Buddha as it was too powerful to have around.

The urn in the photograph contains the cremated remains of Phor Nahn and the only things that came from his Samnak was two of his knives, which he used on dead bodies. If a corpse has not had formalin injected, within a few days the contents of the gut start to liquify and if pierced at the front, it can spurt into the face, reputedly with the power to kill the practitioner. These knives were used to open the corpse at the side, and then another hooked knife was used to cut the intestines, allowing the putrefying liquids to escape away from the Ajarn. The hooked knife also went, but if anyone ever sees Phor Nahn's old guitar, Ajarn Tay says that it would be wonderful to have the chance to buy it.

Phor Sala Tan - an interview with Ajarn Nahn Ting

Phor Nahn Tan was a very kind person, and whatever an Ajarn would like to learn, Phor Nahn Tan would share the knowledge in a calm, friendly way. The Nam Man Prai from Phor Nahn has to be considered to be one of the best ever made, especially his five lady Nam Man Prai, which was exceptional. Phor Nahn's Nam Man Prai is still being used to this day, and many Ajarns use it as a base agent for their own NMP.

The remains of the five ladies were kept because Phor Nahn performed their funeral service and knew of the spiritual quality of their remains. As all these ladies died while pregnant, it is traditional for the relatives to ask the undertaker to separate the babies from the mother. If this was not done, the spirit will die with attachments, so they put them in separate coffins. Separating the bodies hopefully avoids any active hauntings that can result in these circumstances, and it also allowed Phor Nahn access to the Prai materials more safely than would otherwise be the case.

Phor Nahn passed on the Wicha for summoning ghosts to Ajarn Ting, how to use them as a servant and to get them to help with specific rituals. At that time, Phor Nahn lived in San Patong in South Chiang Mai, before his move to Fang, a few hours north by car where his Samnak was constructed using old coffins. While there was never an organised Samnak for the public to visit in San Patong, Phor Nahn was very well known and accepted anyone who wanted to study.

Phor Nahn did a lot of rituals with the bodies of pregnant ladies and was haunted by them, which was why dressing as a woman became the norm, in an attempt to fool the spirits. This habit continued right up to his death in his mid 90's (no one knows his exact age) and considering the powers Phor Nahn played with, it has to be considered a very long life. People warned him of these dangers many times through his life, that the ghosts and the



43. Ajarn Nahn Ting with his undertaker's hammer.

Wicha he used would shorten his lifespan. This is because these ghosts are known to take revenge on people as they grow weaker with age, but Phor Nahn lived longer than any of those that issued the warnings (*laughter*). Phor Nahn Tan had over 20 wives, but the last one stayed the longest and all of his wives were much younger than the lovely old rogue.

Ajarn Ting is sure that they were all under the influence of his magic....

The Role of Men and Women within the Lanna Traditions

an interview with Ajarn Khaw

This question is an important one because it may seem that females are a rare sight within both the temple structure and the magical system of Thailand. Ajarn Khaw was the best Ajarn to ask about this as he was a monk for 20 years and because a lady taught Ajarn's Master some serious magic.

It is probable that everyone will have their own opinion with this question, which has been asked before by Westerner visitors. A long time ago, a woman could be a monk in India and we call them Piksanee, but this is not possible in Thailand at this time because the Buddhist organisation does not support the idea. So if the lady wants to be a monk, the ritual needs to be done in India and then she would travel to Thailand, but they cannot be ordained here. In Thailand, there is only the Mae Chee, who are like a nun who wears white clothes and after a time being a Mae Chee, they also shave their heads in the same manner as the male monk. A Mae Chee with long hair does exist but it means that she has only spent a short time in service.

In the Wat a Mae Chee is like a monk, they pray, say kata, study Pali and even hold certain ceremonies, but they only hold eight precepts rather than the 227 held by most monks. It is impossible to say why a lady cannot be a monk, it is just this way in Thailand but it may change one day.

Every person can do magic but there is some magic that a lady cannot perform, although they can teach it. There are now female Sak Yant Ajarns, and this marks a rising interest from ladies towards the magical arts. In the Lanna traditions, some aspects of magic are only for men and some rituals can only be held by a man who has been a monk before; a lady cannot use that Wicha. Many of the well known Ajarns in this region were monks for a long time, which gives them the right to add the word Nahn to their names, should they choose to do so but Ajarn Nahn Khaw is too long (*laughter*), Ajarn Khaw is easier.

There is a photograph of a lady who looks like a Buddhist Nun in Ajarn's Samnak, but it is not permissible to take an image of her. It is this way with

some old Masters, and with some, it is also forbidden to repeat their names because they come. The lady Master was called Mae Kru Krua (translates as 'Mother Teacher Krua') who was renowned for being able to invite a deity to possess her body, which in this case was Lersi Naa Wua, the bull faced Lersi. The Master who taught Ajarn Khaw was a carefully sceptical man about such things (he believed that there are too many fakes) but after meeting Mae Kru Krua, was stunned at her abilities, asking to be a disciple on the first visit. Mae Kru Krua passed on to Ajarn's Master many Wicha, including the knowledge for Naa Kasan Thoranee, which is a very special magic.

Many women now learn magic and they study with an Ajarn but in general, men like magic more so there are more male Ajarns. If a woman has an interest in magic, many Kruba Ajarns will teach her, and some women have already become Ajarns, but as with all Ajarns, it is essential to know the lineage that they are part of as it indicates the quality of the Wicha bestowed. Many new Ajarns only learn from magic books, but in reality, the only way to be sure of the knowledge is to both receive it from a Master and have them as a guide through the process of studying.

(This is a rare interjection on a subject. The author has had conversations with other Ajarns about this in the past, and there is also the issue of a woman's period blood. In some forms of magic, the menstrual blood is a potent magical agent that can be used to destroy or annul certain types of spells, which may have a bearing on the subject discussed above. There are also ancient curses here that use menstrual blood that are not going to be covered in this book as too dark to put into print. There is as yet, no Ajarn to back these thoughts though as it is phenomenally difficult to frame this question correctly, even by a Thai person.)

Ajarn Perm Rung

Ajarn Perm Rung became interested in Thai magic as a young child because of living next to the crematorium of a temple in Nakhon Sawan. As with many children who come from a poor background, he became a Dek Wat (a child of the Temple) when young because it meant regular meals and a well-structured life, helping the monks with chores in return for an education. There was magic all around him as a child, and the study of kata came naturally after being present at so many chanting sessions, held in the mornings and evenings in the Wats of Thailand. Living at the temple also brought an interest in collecting amulets as everyone wore them then, and with that came a natural curiosity as to the language used on them, it wasn't Thai. With being in the Wat it was easy to ask questions of knowledgeable people, and some of the monks were amused at this precocious child wanting to learn about the Khom script from Cambodia, with his aim to read and write the script.

Ajarn enjoyed being at the Wat as the days there also offered the chance to meet many Ajarns whom he could study with, both through their teachings and watching them work. Interest in everything concerning the world of magic was like a fire within him and his knowledge slowly accrued, rather than through specific organised study or anything forced by teachers or parents. The Ajarns' passed down their knowledge through the experiences that came through being with them, how to make an amulet, use the Yant and what kata to use with each stage of the production. This situation then leads to Ajarn Perm Rung becoming a supplier of items to the Ajarns for their empowerment, such as Hoon Payon, which would be constructed by hand during periods of free time. The Ajarn in question would then write their own Yant and Takrut to complete the talisman. Through being surrounded by magic and becoming part of the magical world, Ajarn Perm Rung gained enough knowledge to understand Yantra and apply Sak Yant at a young age.

The process of becoming an Ajarn started in earnest after a period of being ordained as a monk, and formally studying Buddhism. Buddhism helps a person understand which is the right way and the wrong way with magic, teaching him about the choices available in life and the extremes of both black and white magic. It is correct behaviour for an Ajarn to study both the light and the dark, but Ajarn Perm Rung chose only to keep and use the knowledge of the magic that benefits and protects people. Learning both black and white magic is essential because if someone is cursed, an Ajarn has to understand what has happened and then counter that with a white magic remedy. White magic is used more for protection and to grant wishes, bestow Metta, Maha Niyom, Saneah and other attributes, but without using Prai. It is Puttakhun magic, Buddhist magic. Black magic usually uses Prai materials, and these categories are two entirely different forms of knowledge, completely separate from each other, like doing a good deed and committing a crime. The critical element of performing both types of magic is the psyche and Samathi, because without these there is no power.



44. Ajarn Perm Rung with an offering.



45. Ajarn Perm Rung's Pruk Saek can knock your socks off.

In improving Samathi and the psyche, it is essential to calm the mind and let go of everything, only concentrating on both the doctrine of Buddhism and the Buddha himself. Another method is to focus on the candle flame, which is a whole system in itself but a person must have an excellent teacher to study this method. There is yet another form of meditation which explores the various parts of the body using the mind, but again, it is very difficult, and a teacher is essential. With the practices Ajarn followed, keeping the precepts is also crucial as it hones the qualities of the person and their determination, but they do not specifically enhance the practices followed themselves. The precepts are a way of building the merits of the self, which helps with these studies.

As with all good magicians, Ajarn Perm Rung's studies continue to this day, as do the practices that are essential in gaining a stronger Samathi and an iron psyche.

How to behave when visiting a Samnak - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

As everything with Thai magic is new to foreigners, Ajarn wants to help them by passing on some information about what to do, and how to behave when visiting a Samnak to save any embarrassment. The first thing to know is that after entering they should first pay respect to the Buddha and the Ajarn and behave like they are visiting a temple. Try to be quiet and respectful, gentle when speaking and slow to move around.

There was one time when a foreigner who didn't know about Thai culture walked into the Samnak wearing a skirt and stepped over some amulets. In Thai culture, the feet are the lowest part of the body and to step over something shows disrespect. Through this action, it destroyed the effect of the blessing of the amulets and Ajarn had to repeat the blessing, which can take a long time. It is also impolite to point the feet at the Ajarn or towards his altar, which has an image of the Buddha. The basic rule is that if in doubt, ask, and Ajarn will be happy to answer as it provides the chance for him to help. The Thai people try to find a good way for people and avoid any difficulties, enabling everyone to have a good relationship and be friends.

Unlike a monk, an Ajarn can be touched by a lady because of being a layperson like everyone else, but he cannot have an affair with a lady due to the precepts he keeps as part of his practices. Ajarn is married, and if he had an affair it breaks his vow of correct behaviour. As Ajarn Perm Rung says, how can he make magic work for other people if it is not possible for him to keep a pledge? This is just one of the many rules that have to be followed to keep the magic strong. Another one is that because Ajarn Rung uses his mouth to chant spells and say kata, words which have to be fully respected as they are often part of Buddhism, one of the vows kept is that it is not permitted for him to perform oral sex.

Black and White Magic in Thailand

An interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

Thai White Magic has no involvement with ghosts and does not use any part of the human body as a source of power, but Thai Black magic does. White magic is constructed using Wahn (magical plants) and sacred items, such as ancient Buddha amulets that are crushed and mixed in with the herbal mixture. These ancient talismans, many of which many are found buried in temple grounds, are considered to be sacred and a source of power as they have absorbed the earth element. White magic or Buddhist magic is known as Puttakhun (Putta = Buddhism and Khun = value), and the practice of it follows Puttasart Wicha.

The effect of White and Black magic is the same as they both offer the attributes such as Saneah and Metta, but white magic cannot be used to harm another or bring someone under their control through lust or love. Each of the types are praised in different ways. Any amulet that contains Prai or a ghost is considered to be black magic, although not necessarily magic to harm people. It is just magic with a spirit, and it needs to be praised with offerings that include food, alcohol and cigarettes, offerings from the human realm that act as bribery. With Puttakhun magic, the offerings remind yourself of the value of Buddhism, with water, flowers and incense although most shrines have a combination of both styles of talismans.

Black and White Magic in Thailand - an interview with Ajarn Khaw

Many people misunderstand the differences between dark and light magic in Thailand, and they ask, 'is this Kuman Thong black or white magic?' Actually, it is just Kuman Thong magic. Ghost materials are placed there for more power, and this is not black magic, black magic is magic to hurt people, to do something bad to them. Most amulets and statues are not black or white magic, they are just magic, and magic is beneficial.

Some people also think that magic that makes attracts them against their wishes is black magic, but no, that is just Saneah, charming magic. If a person has charming magic, people will look at them and feel good, and that is a nice thing for everyone, not black magic at all.

Making black magic brings negative elements, and an Ajarn has ways to clear this through Sompoi baths and offerings to the Masters. Ajarn Khaw performs very little black magic as it is not correct practice to hurt others, and an Ajarn needs to care for himself. He uses protective spells because of working with many ghosts, but if an Ajarn works with them too much, problems can arise. Sometimes a spirit that an Ajarn has been working with may try and attack, so an Ajarn has to have reliable protection. There are many Kata to help protect against this problem and keep Ajarns safe from harmful entities.

The Effects of Performing Black Magic

An interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

This is an important question that has been raised many times in conversations with practitioners of the art. With the Thai language, it is difficult to interview concerning some subjects to make sure that the question was understood correctly, and to then to translate accurately to pass on the nuances of an Ajarns answer. This interview is about the cost of working with Black Magic and the way the Ajarns protect themselves as they age.

When an Ajarn who has performed a lot of Black Magic gets older, they will become weaker physically and mentally due to the ageing. At that time, they do not generally practice magic as much or as carefully as they did in their youth. The Ajarn can lose their immunity to the spirits, and it is easier for malevolent ghosts that they may have upset through their works to attack them. As evidence for this, as the Ajarns age, they slowly stop working Black Magic but keep the Puttakhun and work mostly with the White. The result of losing power when they age means that some Ajarns get haunted by a particular spirit, which might even cause their death or send them insane. There was also a recent case where we all believe that a famous Ajarn from this region committed suicide because of a malevolent ghost.

Phor Sala Tan was one of the best known Lanna Ajarns of this past 100 years and the ageing process brought with it the need to cut down on the black magic. Due to the fear that a spirit may seek revenge, Phor Sala Tan dressed as a woman to fool the ghosts, but before passing away, Phor Nahn went back to dressing like a man and suddenly died. Mind you, Phor Sala Tan was 92 (*laughter*), which is very old for an Ajarn. The only way to avoid the problems of ageing and being attacked by strong ghosts is to stop Black Magic, and Ajarn Perm Rung is slowly starting to cut down on the use of Prai. Ajarn now practices strict Buddhism, keeps more precepts and makes merit to any spirit that he could have wronged during the process of making magical items.

Possessions within The Thai Occult Practices

an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

This is a difficult subject and quite contentious in the world of The Thai Occult as many people fake possession. The question posed as as simple as possible in the hope is that this raises the point as to whether Ajarns themselves become possessed, because possession is a big part of other magical systems.

Khong Khun is one of the Thai words for ‘possession’, and it occurs in two circumstances. *Khong Khun* happens with devotees who have Sak Yant tattoos when they have either not been able to hold the precepts or break



46. A devotee goes into Khong Khun at the hands of Ajarn Khaw.

the rules that have been given by the Ajarn. It is prone to happen during the Wai Kru ceremony due to the energetic atmosphere that comes with all the devotees being present, and it is the time when everyone present affirms their precepts and actions. It also depends on the person who holds the tattoos as some are more prone to react than others. As far as the Ajarns becoming possessed, it happens rarely and only to a few Ajarns. It depends on the person, but it can happen because they act as a medium or a conduit to channel the power through their body when making an amulet or doing magic. Some perceive this as not a traditional possession, but it can be seen as a style of possession although the Ajarn will not appear to *Khong Khun* by anyone present. It is internal and not visible to a bystander.

Possessions - an interview with Ajarn Suea

It is quite easy for devotees to become possessed by the power in their tattoos, but an Ajarn does not act in this way because the Ajarn has a stronger psyche. It is very rare to see an Ajarn *Khong Khun*, but it can happen if that Ajarn has not followed the correct rules pertaining to the magic he practices or the Ajarn in question is not yet proficient enough to hold the title.

If a Thai devotee sees the Ajarn *Khong Khun*, they will lose respect.

Possessions - an interview with Ajarn Khaw

The old belief is that if someone breaks the rules of practice that have been set by the Masters they can *Khong Khun* and be possessed during the Korb Sian ritual, even Ajarns. The state of *Khong Khun* makes people appear crazy and they cannot control themselves, but my Master's Master used to be possessed by the Bull Head Lersi, and this is not the same. In this state, Mae Kru Krua was controlled by the Lersi, was a conduit to the gods and in the Thai language, there are many ways to describe this, which shows how common this state is within the culture. The simplest way to say this would be *Lang Song* (possession). Ajarn Khaw's Master never believed in *Lang Song* before meeting Mae Kru Krua, and Ajarns Master only ever believed Mae Kru. Ajarn Khaw is not convinced by people in *Lang Song* either but hopes to meet someone who becomes truly possessed one day, someone who is real.

During a ceremony, Ajarn admits to sometimes getting a strong feeling from the Lersi, but has to hold steady and not lose Samathi. This is not possession, Ajarn Khaw is inviting the Masters and many Lersi to come to help with the blessing and they work through Ajarn. He is a conduit.

Ajarn Nahn Khong

Ajarn Nahn Khong's interest in magic arrived quite late in life, at 25 and it came because of a period of ill health. If a Thai person is chronically sick early in life, the cause can be attributed to something spiritual and to combat this; some become a monk to cleanse their existence and regain their health. Monks follow the teachings of the Buddha and pursue a life of giving to the community they serve, part of which is the study of kata, chanting, and the scripture used when constructing Yantra. Each monk has a Kruba Ajarn who will pass on their knowledge of attaining Samathi to enable a monk to practice the use of the psyche when constructing Yantra as well as which kata to use to boost their power. Ajarn says that the building of Samathi and the psyche brought balance to his body through the four elements and the raising of the spirit, returning him to robust health.

Ajarn Nahn Khong's Kruba Ajarn was Kruba Tom, who taught Ajarn for many years but during this time Ajarn was also encouraged to go and study with other monks. Being a monk for more than a decade is the reason why Ajarn is referred to as Ajarn Nahn Khong, with the Nahn added to the name denoting the extended time in the orange robes. The title of Nahn is a Northern Thai or Lanna tradition, but these traditions are different in other parts of the country.

Ajarn Nahn Khong has continued to study to this day because with the deepening of Samathi or increased psyche comes new ways to relate to Wicha, an action that refreshes magical practices. Ajarn has many Luksit and has even been asked by Westerners whether they can study to be an Ajarn, and the answer is, of course! Firstly though, it is best to ordain as a monk as it is the perfect training, highly beneficial to the practice of making magic but many people now have busy lives. The responsibilities of modern life can make things difficult for devotees, but it is still possible to study to be an Ajarn as long as the Luksit is dedicated. One of the first stages would be to know the Thai language and the scripts used, and many achieve this before becoming a Luksit. A knowledge of Pali and Buddhism is also essential, and from that point, a person can learn about magic.

The Lanna Masters

Ajarn Nahn Khong is the head of the Lanna Masters group, which is a collection of the strongest magicians in the area, minus the wonderful Ajarn Sala Boon Khong as he is an 'indie Ajarn' (*his words*). The group gathers for the Wai Kru ceremonies of each member and also for the special construction of talismans that are made to aid the community. In the example of the photographs here, this was a meeting to consecrate some amulets to make tamboon for a local school. This kind of grouping of magicians must be quite rare in the world of magic, and they all both respect and take care of each other because they are stronger together.



47. Ajarn Nahn Khong looking very smart at a Lanna Masters event at his Samnak, south of Chiang Mai.



48. This was a big event and as always, monks take precedent over Ajarns. Note the Sai Sin thread hanging from above for each person to add their spiritual force.



49. Monks always lead the chanting and there were some very important Luang Phor's and Kruba's in attendance.



50. A small Lersi shrine in Ajarn's Samnak on a level below the Buddha.

The Construction of an Altar and the Offerings

an interview with Ajarn Nahn Khong

An altar should either face to the North or the East and neither be in direct sunlight or the bedroom if the devotee enjoys Prai, because the ghosts can come to your dreams. With the direction of the altar, the Buddha, Lersi, and deities look to the East or North and Prai look West. Facing West or South is not good, so please avoid those directions. The description of the levels given here is for a full altar in the style of an Ajarn, but if a devotee does not have one of the levels, it is just missed out. Everyone is different and they should follow the way that they perceive is best for them.

The very top of the altar should have The Buddha, the enlightened one. A level below this should be for his close disciples such as Phra Sivali and Katyayana.

Below this, please place the statues of monks and on this level, there should be a bowl of incense in the middle. On the same level can be placed any god, goddess or Lersi and this often marks the top of many people's altars.

The amulets on any altar should also be separated into these levels and not all placed on one, they go with their statues, if there is one. The figures on each level are physical representations of the Buddha and the higher beings, but if a person does not possess a Buddha or Lersi for example, holding them in mind during practice will suffice. Keeping them in mind is important because the higher deities protect and provide some control of the lower spirits.

The deities are on the next level, which includes Mae Per, Phra Ngang, Khun Paen etc and if these have p[rai in them, they face West.

And finally, the last level is for the spirits and the ghosts that also face West.

When offering food, flowers and water to the altar, they act as a payment of respect to what is present on the altar to remind the devotee of their existence. Water is pure and needed by all living things, and the food is sustenance and flowers bring a scent, the essence of nature and sense of the beauty of life. Other offerings on the lower levels of deities, ghosts and spirits are decided on by the Master who made them, who will advise on what they need. The tidiness of the altar also represents the peaceful nature of the life of the devotee (or not!), if it is messy, the action of caring and cherishing for the items on the altar brings great benefit to both the practice and a person's daily existence.

In a recent chat, Ajarn Suea repeated the advice about an altar facing to the North or East, and confirmed that anything that contains Prai should face West. This can be done on the same altar by turning them around or having a separate altar for those items, as Ajarn Suea has in his Samnak in Chiang Mai. There are altars that face South but these are for the angelics, the Taep's and the Taewadaa, which are rarely seen on a shrine.

Ajarn Nahn Khong recommends that it is best for everyone to either wear a Buddha or the image of an important monk as they raise the essence of the spirit and provide protection from the lower spirits. These items are hung around the neck only, and any Prai items are placed around the waist. If a devotee only wears Prai items, then they can wear them where they want, it is ok, but if there is a Lersi present, the Lersi should go round the neck and the Prai round the waist. The levels also have to be correct for Phra Ngang, Mae Per and the deities if worn with Prai talismans; the deities go round the neck and the Prai on the waist. In this way, the way an amulet is worn follows the rules for the levels of the altar.

Offerings to an Altar - an interview with Ajarn Suea

Please note here that Ajarn's personal altar is made up of the Lersi and the Buddha only, which affects the offerings.

And why are there often Pig's Heads?

Ajarn Suea's tradition sometimes involves the use of pigs heads and other foods for offerings at the shrine in the Samnak. Sometimes, even a cows head is used but only when the Ajarn in question has an iron psyche and strict personal practice, meaning that this is rarely seen now. If pigs heads are used as an offering during the Wai Kru, it is an offering that acts to help the Ajarn break through an obstacle. If a pig's head is used at other times, it is usually because of an important request being made, where Ajarn needs help from above.

(There is a distinction here between this and the public Wai Kru. Here, Ajarn Suea is referring to performing Wai Kru to his Lersi altar as they are his teachers and this is not an event for the public, it is part of the personal practices of Ajarn Suea)

The offerings to the Lersi altar include pigs heads, chicken, sweets and fruit. The different Lersi prefer different types of food. The Tiger faced Lersi eats the meat, other Lersi are vegetarian, and the offerings are given in a way that the Lersi can choose what they want, like a buffet at a spiritual party.



51. The use of pig's heads during the Wai Kru of Ajarn Ting.



52. The Nats of Ajarn Piyasitti.

Burmese Magic

Because of Burma's proximity to Thailand, the Burmese Occult system has influenced many Ajarns in the Lanna region, and a review of it is relevant to this book. The information that came to light on this subject through the interviews is astonishing, and contradicts much of what is known at this juncture. In this first section, let's construct what is understood from existing works and then the Ajarns can relate what they know about this fascinating subject. Building an understanding of the Burmese Occult has to be done slowly because it is complicated.

The religious cults in Burma have been of interest to anthropologists for quite some time, but there is little understanding of it on a magical level. There are three major reference works available on the subject, from which, here is an attempt to construct an idea of what is known before moving on to interview a few practitioners of Burmese Magic. The three works are:-

Melford E Spiro - *Burmese Supernaturalism* - 1978

G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 and

G Rozenberg - *The Immortals* - 2015.

As always, sifting through the anthropological slant of the subject to source the magical references is a time-consuming job. The most readable of the books is *Champions of Buddhism* by Rozenberg, but all are worth absorbing for a deeper understanding of the mysteries found within the Burmese magical traditions. This section hopes to answer many of the questions that have been raised by interested parties regarding the Burmese system, which is complex and decidedly strange.

Burmese magic is considered to have four levels of practitioners with the spiritually lowest one being the witch, of which there appear to be many hidden within the society, reflecting the old Burmese proverb, 'without witches we cannot build our villages'. In one village of 146 households, a village elder estimated that he had 20 witches, suggesting that it is a widespread practice, almost akin to folk art. Some believe that the witches are evil spirits in the form of a human being but what is sure is that they possess the supernatural powers to cause suffering thorough curses and rituals, so this is aggressive magic in a similar way to the Mhor Phi in Thailand. The powers that witches possess are considered to be innate rather than learned as they wield forces that are latent within the practitioner rather than in the magic itself and the witches are predominantly women. It is generally considered that men have to study the magic intently and therefore follow a different way. The sexes delineate the two types of Burmese witch, which are known as *souns* (female) and *aulan hsayas*, the latter of which can also be called a Master of the Lower Path (which refers to it being an occult path) or a Master Witch. It is interesting that the Master Witch can help the witch to gain more power through his knowledge with a ceremony where they go

to a cemetery, dig a pit and then she is buried up to the neck. The Master would then call upon various dark spirits within the graveyard to enter the woman through her mouth, and those spirits will then instruct the witch in the use of magical power, acting as familiars.

The *souns* practice through personal spite, whereas the *aulan hsayas* usually perform for a client and are considered to be more powerful due to their control of the techniques used. The *souns* practice their evil through an innate power and spells, rites and material substances but the *aulan hsaya* does the work through ghosts, Nats and other evil spirits. The Nats are not part of Buddhism and are considered to be a group of spirits, around which have grown elaborate systems of beliefs, rituals and even sects. There seems to be a vast number of these Nats although devotees usually dedicate themselves to the top 37, the members of which change often. These 37 Nats ('evil' Nats and the 37 number is not specific, akin to 108 in the Thai system, it just means a large number) are ghosts, and they include those that have died violent deaths, which are known as 'green deaths' in Burma. The Nats can also be strong nature spirits associated with a feature such as a waterfalls, hills, trees and paddy fields (nature Nats that also include *Chao Thii*, land spirits where a house or village resides) and the third category of Nats comprises the lower devas from the Buddhist realms (good Nats). It appears that the Nat cults praise the world of the spirits and the *aulan hsayas* can direct these powers to both cure or cause illness, or even death.

The *aulan hsaya* attains magical power through dedicated studies to coerce spirits to perform magical tasks by feeding them raw meat until they become dependent on this source of extreme nourishment. The offerings must consist of both sacred and the profane elements, and through these, the magician gains power over the Nats. The profane elements may comprise of the beak of a crow, the penis of a dog, a woman's skirt or cemetery earth and the sacred may be a Buddhist streamer from a shrine or earth from an ordination ground. A Master Witch may then set fire to this mixed offering at the shrine of Mahagiri Nat (for example), a Nat who is repelled by fire to gain control of the Nat chosen as his agent. If that technique is not sufficient, a more usual way is to smear the face of a Nat with this type of mixture. The Burmese are scared to talk of the Lower Path practitioners as they are considered malicious, but Melford Spiro did include one case study in his work on Burmese Supernaturalism.

The case involved a philandering husband and his wife's attempt to break up his latest affair. For a fee, the Master witch coerced some Nats to cause the husband and his mistress to argue during coitus. The magic worked so well that they became violent, leading to their arrest and eventual incarceration. He achieved this in the following way. From the wife he obtained the husband's horoscope, which he placed on the ashes of an In (a cabalistic square, more on this later in this section). He then chanted certain kata,

repeating them 18 times, while holding in his hand one end of a string that was wrapped round his big toe. He then used that string to make the wick of a candle, onto which he carved some Yantra and carried that along with a tray holding beef, fish, flowers and charcoal, to the cemetery. There he lit the candle and while chanting more kata, waited for flies to come and eat the food before raising his heel over the candle (this is to reduce the object person's power to be able to affect them with the ritual, akin to a Kom ceremony and remember here that the feet are the lowest part of the spiritual body). The flies were Nats that he had called and once they had eaten, he could command them to do his bidding. These actions break taboos within the culture regarding etiquette, but does lead to powerful magic, with the principle of it being 'to force someone to enjoy what is given is to gain power over them' which in this case refers to one of the Nats.

Above the Master of the Lower Path there is the Master of the Higher Path. The Masters of the Lower Path may use the same techniques of the Masters of the Higher Path, the *ahtelan hsaya* but with greater malicious intent. The Masters of the Higher Path give Sak Yant, practice meditation in graveyards, and some have a tattoo that represents the Buddha under their feet (which is considered to be an astonishingly dark action in this region). The *aulan hsaya* also call on ogres and malevolent spirits to watch over their Yantra and spells. The distinction between the lower and higher Masters is not well defined, and even if the Higher Path Master is a monk, an ambiguity may remain. The terminology used to describe these Masters in Burmese is deliberately vague to avoid offence ¹. The *ahtelan hsaya* is a layman or a monk who is devoted to meditation and to respect the Buddhist morality. This Higher Master prevents and cures any aggressive magic that has been directed at a person with the help of the Weikza and deities, using consecrated water and Yantra to help people rather than harm ².

The next level in the Burmese system is one that many strive to reach but the journey to reach that point is arduous, and many spend a lifetime on this path but fail. The ultimate aim of the devoted spiritual life in Burma is to become a Weikza.

The Weikza

A Weikza is a human male who has successfully complied with the prescribed moral precepts, meditation practices and mastery of one among the specialised Weikza arts of alchemy, yantra and medicines. A Weikza is a cult figure who sooner or later leaves the visible world to live as a spirit in the realm of the Weikza, who either reside in the forests or mountains of Burma or on the slopes of the Himalaya. From this position, a Weikza will frequently enter into a relationship with the living as a guide to a higher spiritual realm through visions, possession and the transmission of energy or power ³.

A Weikza can be considered to be a 'double-being' who combines and joins the mundane and the supramundane, who converts magic into mysticism and thereby modifies its value. Significantly, the Pali term *Vijja* (*Wicha* in Thai) from which the term Weikza derives, is used for either a mundane form of knowledge (such as Mathematics), a magical knowledge such as the science of spells or a supernatural one ⁴. The Weikza are on the edge of conventional Buddhism and are often compared to a *Arahant* (Buddhist Saint), but they cut a very different figure. They are Masters of the esoteric arts and possess extraordinary magical potency, making full use of their powers to assist good people and defend the Buddha's teachings ⁵. Interestingly, they only made their appearance as a Buddhist hero in the early 19th-century folklore in the figure of a wizard named *Bo Bo Aung*, who is recognisable as a white-turbaned layman. *Bo Bo Aung's* appearance corresponded to the time when *Vipassana* meditation became extremely popular in the region but whether there is any connection between the two is yet to be devised.

To have the chance of becoming a Weikza, a devotee follows an esoteric religious system that requires initiation under a High Master or *Hsaya*, and instruction in a repertoire of occult sciences whose mysteries are kept secret from outsiders. The root is in the practices of Buddhism (and in Burma, the Weizka are considered to be Buddhist wizards) and devotion to the *Hsaya* is essential for progress to be made within the art. Apprenticeship entails several disciplines: the use of magical incantations and spells, alchemy, particularly those associated with the manipulation of mercury and iron, the traditional medicine of indigenous, Chinese and Ayurvedic origins as well as the construction of *Yantra*. In Burma, *Yantra* are considered as essential devices for healing and protection and are applied to talismans that are either worn, placed under the skin, tattooed on the body or consumed. In the latter respect, they are written on paper which can be either rolled and swallowed like a pill or burned into ash and swallowed as medicine ⁶. While training in the esoteric sciences is essential for a Weizka, the usual Buddhist practices are not neglected. The essential aspects of the method are the observance of the five precepts and the practice of *Samathi*; the focus attained through strong meditative practice, which equips the Weizka practitioner with the moral authority and mental strength needed to exercise control over a host of spirits (*Nats*). These *Nats* range from the demonic to the benign and their power must be tapped to unlock the essential elements of certain herbs, potions and incantations ⁷.

In keeping with the ultimate aim of the system, Weikza practitioners also work for their physical perfection, applying the same sciences to their bodies to render them invulnerable to injury or decay. The principal metaphor is alchemical, as the corruptible body is transformed into a stable substance, just as base metals which tarnish are transmuted into gold. It is upon completing this transformation that the practitioner becomes what is known as a *Weikza-do*, a 'possessor of [esoteric] knowledge.' Another term that needs to be introduced is the *htwet-yat-pauk*, which means 'exit place'

and signifies the adept's own body at the point of exit whence he escapes the mortal plane. In Weikza manuals, the final stage of transition from a mortal master to an immortal wizard is portrayed in a variety of ways depending on the sectarian affiliation of the authors. In one of the more dramatic scenarios the Master has his disciples prepare for him a coffin in which he will lay unconscious. The coffin will be sealed and placed within a specially prepared chamber, perhaps an ordination hall because of its sanctity, or buried in the ground. At this time, the hsaya will be helpless against the forces of darkness that will surely try to destroy him. To defend him, disciples will draw protective diagrams, recite the appropriate incantations and arm themselves with alchemical stones (dat-lon) to hurl at evil forces as they try to enter the consecrated space ⁸.

(Note: The construction of a dat-lon can take a lifetime and it is a risky process that results in many deaths due to the use of mercury. Burma is rich in mineral wealth and there are caves where mercury drips from the ceiling. One of the aspects of those on the Weizka path is the attempt to change the mercury into a crystallised metal using mixtures of iron and other metals with the mercury, and this is a process that can take decades. The dat-lon is then imbued with the spiritual energy of the practitioner, and the resulting ball of metal is said to have power beyond what is possible. They are highly prized and can be phenomenally expensive (depending on the source), often to be seen on the rich and powerful sections of Burmese society, either in rings or around the neck. Because mercury is a liquid, and theoretically impossible to make into a solid unless below -39 degrees, making it into a solid is considered to be a supernatural process as it goes against nature. The process of making these balls invokes the idea of the lifespan of the practitioner, passing from gestation in the womb, through childhood and into adulthood but the process also leads to 'death'. A ball is considered 'dead' when it is no longer affected by fire and is deemed then to have transcended life, akin to the Weizka themselves. Once the ball is in this state, the action of deep Samathi can imbue it with extreme power as it acts to cleanse the ball of all defilement, which links it to the body of the practitioner who seeks the same action within himself.)

After a pre-determined amount of time the coffin will be opened, and if the disciples find it empty with only clothes left behind, they will know that their Master had successfully de-materialised his body and escaped as an immortal. A person who makes the transition in this manner is called an ashin-htwet, or one who 'exits alive.' A variation on this scenario has the successful practitioner leave behind an incorruptible body in the form of a mummy to serve as a kind of relic for veneration by the faithful. A Weikza-do who departs in this way is called an athay-htwet or one who 'exits through apparent death': apparent because although the body is dead, the mind of the practitioner did not itself die when exiting the body but ascended to the realm of the immortals perfectly alive. A third possibility, of course, is that upon opening the coffin the disciples find a rotting corpse, at which point

they will realise that the Master had failed in his purpose and died a mortal death. The techniques used by the Weizka practitioners to 'exit' the mortal plane have close parallels with Chinese Daoist procedures for attaining immortality through 'corpse deliverance' in which the physical body is shed, and the immortal spirit set free. Of the many scenarios envisioned in Daoist sources, leaving behind an incorruptible body and leaving behind little or nothing at all closely match the Burmese transitions. While possible Indian and Chinese influences on the Burmese Weizka traditions could go back centuries, it was not until the turn of the twentieth century that the Weizka in Burma became well known and respected 9.

1. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p185
2. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p177
3. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p ix
4. G Rozenberg - *The Immortals* - 2015 p47
5. Patrick Pranke - *On Saints and Wizards* - 2008 p467
6. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p14
7. Patrick Pranke - *On Saints and Wizards* - 2008 p470
8. G Rozenberg - *The Immortals* - 2015 p86
9. Patrick Pranke - *On Saints and Wizards* - 2008 p473 - 479

Burmese Yantra

The making, manipulating, and mastering of sacred Yantra diagrams is an essential practice in the Burmese magical system, adding to the arsenal of techniques acquired on the path to becoming a practitioner. Hung in homes, monasteries, shops, cars and around the neck; inscribed on gold, copper and silver plates; written on paper; carved into candles; or tattooed on bodies, these devices (known as *In* and *Sama*) are used for a variety of purposes. These purposes range from the mundane (acquiring love and wealth) to the supramundane (transforming oneself into a Weizka). The source of the words *In* and *Sama* is unknown and appear to be purely Burmese with no origin in Pali or Sanskrit 1.

An *In* is a geometrically designed square consisting of cells, the number of which is determined by, among other things, the number of the syllables in the kata used as the foundation of the *In*. A *Sama* is a drawing that is made up of Burmese characters compiled in such a way as to produce images of Buddhas, holy figures and animals. Both can be classified as Yantra in the sense that they are linear representations consisting of letters, numbers, syllables or kata and they are used to bring about desired results on behalf of the user. Most Yantra employed by Burmese practitioners originate from one of the following sources:

1. Holy figures or hermits can appear in dreams or in person to present a practitioner with a Yantra.



53. A Burmese Panneng with a Sama, an image constructed using Akhara.

2. Yantra can arise in the mind during periods of intense meditation.
3. Using the knowledge of the laws and properties of Yantra, a practitioner can attempt to develop their own Yantra by combining parts of other Yantra in the hope of uncovering a potent number/letter combination.
4. Yantra can be revealed by Weikza saints through a visual or auditory experience.

There are many grimoires of ancient Yantra, but the Burmese believe that they cannot be used by a practitioner unless he has had the correct guidance as doing so can both harm the user and be utterly useless. There are some Yantra that cannot be used by an inexperienced person. They can be harmful without the proper training and publishers of the works of the Weikza are also wary of them being used for malevolent purposes. The Burmese way to use Yantra has meant that most written sources for them

are scant in both detail and instructions on usage. Using a Yantra incorrectly can cause harm to the person wielding it because they do not have the correct knowledge, training or moral discipline required. In Burma and Thailand, the magical path is predominantly an oral tradition that needs a skilled guide and absolute dedication.

The Yantra discussed here is firmly rooted in Buddhism and is considered to be one of the foundational Yantras studied by novices and Masters alike as part of a first step into the art. The first step in making the *In* is to follow a prescribed set of preparatory rituals to ensure that both his body, the instrument of production and the area chosen has been cleansed of malevolent forces. Before starting to write, the Namo Dtassa chant has to be performed three times while holding the instrument before drawing the outside border. With every line, there is a kata, and it needs to start and finish as the line starts and finishes, meaning that a kata is said for each of the four sides. Kata has to be spoken to draw the two inner horizontal and vertical lines to create a square that is made up of 9 squares. The numbers in the Yantra then starts to fills in the nine boxes with numbers corresponding to the constituents of enlightenment, and they are set down in a manner that has its origins in Burmese chess! Each number has a kata, but the central square is saved till last as that number activates the Yantra. The completed Yantra is then blessed with kata, ending with an action to 'breathe life' into it (the Pruk Saek). 2

There are 16 rules that the maker must adhere to for the Yantra to be effective, which can be summarised under three categories:

1. The uncleanness of the inscriber and his writing instruments.
2. Faultiness in the Yantra's construction (like leaving a space between lines that should be connected).
3. The practitioners lack of Samathi while constructing the Yantra.

These rules must be adhered to diligently, or the Yantra loses potency, which can be devastating for the inscriber who has devoted enormous amounts of time and effort to the process.

For the practitioner to access the power of the Yantra, it must be ingested by burning it and swallowing the ash with water. Some do not burn it before consuming it for fear that some of the Yantra may be lost, making to whole process ineffective, and instead, they roll it up and swallow it whole. The practice of ingesting the Yantra involves a three-stage process that is completed over several months: drinking first 108, secondly consuming 1,000 and thirdly, consuming 5,000 Yantras. Completing the first stage will give the practitioner the power to cure those under the magical influence of others and to be loved by celestial beings. Finishing the second stage will

provide the practitioner with clairvoyant powers, and if he manages to perfectly inscribe and ingest the 5,000 Yantra, he will attain the supernatural forces that are associated with the Weikza. These powers include being able to visit the astral beings and deities in realms not accessible to non-Weikza, being taught by them and continuing in the process of ingesting the In for another nine months can ensure this path.

Under the guidance of a teacher, a practitioner would follow a prescribed regimen of drawing, burning and ingesting thousands of Yantra over the course of several months in the hope of acquiring the supernatural powers associated with the chosen In or Sama. As one practitioner said, "Dealing with Yantra can drive a person mad. After spending months drinking thousands and thousands of *In/Sama*, if it doesn't work, a process begins where the devotee has to decide if it was because one letter was too big or maybe it was because the timing of the chanting of the kata was not correct. The process then has to begin again from the beginning."

Eventually, one of the aims of this process is to master one of the specific devices, to have 'ownership' of it and any associated powers it may offer, which would then settle into the practitioner's body, giving the practitioner the ability to use the power at will.

Sak Yant Tattoos for protection and invulnerability are used by the Burmese, but their inks are often vermillion in colour due to the addition of cinnabar and various herbs. Besides the power of the invoked symbol, the mixture itself is an essential element, giving power to the applied tattoo, which may often be just a dot. The most important aspect of this is that the mixture enters the bloodstream and here it is essential that the reader understands the dangers of making such potions for use in tattooing. Cinnabar is mercury ore and incredibly poisonous, so it has to be prepared by a Master to render it usable, a practice that even the people interviewed in this section declined to share with non-initiates.

Any representation of a Yantra tattoo on its own is not as effective as the mixture used ³. This mixture is often one that was left behind by a Weikza who has exited the world, leaving elemental substances that can be used by disciples. The lineage uses the same mixture as their Weikza, almost adding a biological element to the group's bond and the mixture itself is deemed powerful enough to initiate a disciple to be an exorcist. The mixture gives the authority and the power needed to perform such actions as it taps into the origins of the brotherhood of disciples all the way back to the Weikza who created it.

1. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p160

2. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p144-156

3. G Rozenberg - *Champions of Buddhism* - 2014 p195

The construction of a Lanna Yant Neap

An Interview with Ajarn Apichai

As a comparative piece, here is an interview with Ajarn Apichai on the construction of the Yant Neap magical square to get an indication as to any sharing of construction techniques between the Lanna and Burmese systems.

The making of a square Yant is the same as making any Yant as there are kata associated with any mark made, including for the drawing of the lines that form both the external and internal boundaries of the construction. The same rule is followed when drawing on cloth, skin, or in this case, a thin sheet of metal. Each part of the drawing has a different kata, so there is a kata for the external square (drawn in a clockwise direction and the drawing instrument does not come off the medium until the full square is complete) and different kata for the internal lines. These lines are known as the bones of the kata, in direct relationship to how the bones support a person, and the rules follow the ancient way and they cannot be altered.

The Yant Neap is a Lanna construction for Metta Maha Niyom, Maha Saneah and protection from harm. The Yant Neap is drawn on a rectangle of thin metal that is then folded inwards, meaning that the drawn Yant is on the outside. If a devotee is in love, write their name on a Mayom leaf, a Plu leaf or a palm leaf (or their photo suffices) and put it inside the folded metal to carry around. Chant the kata every day, carry it all the time, and it will come true. If the person has a problem or misunderstanding with anyone, write their name onto one of the leaves and say the kata every day while thinking of the problem dissolving and the problem will go away. If they put money or something valuable in the folded metal, it will help bring wealth. If the Yant is put into water and the devotee washes their face with that water, it helps with Maha Saneah. There are many uses for this powerful Yant.

Each Lanna letter that is drawn in the squares of the Yant Neap also has an associated kata, and while the letters can be read clockwise, they are not drawn in that order. They start in the top left, then middle right and the order is strictly adhered to, but the middle one is left till last, although in this old Yant, the middle one is empty, meaning that there's eight kata for the construction of the spell. In ancient times the middle one could be used to carry a name, the object of desire or the name of the person holding the Yant. The same Yant Neap is drawn on the other half of the rectangle of metal and the centre square can have the name of the person you love and fold them together would bring you together. This Neap can also be used for darker purposes because if the centre square carries the name of a couple that you want to break up, it is folded the other way so that the drawn Yants face each other, rather than being on the outside. This action has similarities with some forms of candle magic and works to break the object couple apart.

In the modern version of this Yant Neap, the middle one is left empty, and people place a photo of their heart's desire inside or put money into the fold to bring good fortune. As with the ancient ways of construction, there are kata for the male side and different kata for the female side, which makes this a technically difficult construction that differs from other Yant squares in the Lanna system, as well as square Yants from the Burmese system.



54. *The Lanna Yant Neap by Ajarn Apichai.*



55. Ajarn Nahn Ting and his astonishing statue to Suea Yen.

Ajarn Nahn Ting

Ajarn Ting had been surrounded by magic from a young age due to having sorcerers on both sides of the family, but he only took the first steps to study it from the age of 14. Having a sorcerer within the family is the way with the culture of the Lanna region, and many Ajarns begin their studies by being influenced by familial lineages. At first, Ajarn studied from books and scrolls without any guidance, learning the alphabets used in the various magical systems available and took up the practice of meditation before beginning to help the family elders with rituals and following them to the graveyards. They considered him to be an odd child because from an early age Ajarn expressed the desire to be an undertaker, even though there are no other family members who perform this task and it was that that lead him into learning magic. Ajarn Ting's brother had the same interests and they explored many forms of dark magic together, but unfortunately, he passed away some years ago. The family thinks this to have been the consequence of going too far to the dark side, and consider that it was the extreme forces within the Wicha he studied that killed him.

There has to be a balance in the Wicha that is held within an Ajarn as much as there is a balance that must be kept in life and from that point, Ajarn Ting turned to white magic to bring a balance to the magic within in him. There are crossroads in the path of magic and his brothers death pushed Ajarn towards a white magic system from Burma, as well as deepening his studies of the extensive herbal lore of the Lanna region. Burmese magic is considered to be a high ranking and pure form of magic (Sai Prachao Ha Pra Ong - this is magic from the 5 Masters that are often seen as statues in Burmese magic), and it has many differences to Thai or Lanna magic. The Lanna style of magic was strongly influenced by the Tai Yai system, which shows how the knowledge has travelled. Ajarn Ting is sure that outsiders do not understand the depth and complexity of the magic within this region, which is expressed in the fact that Ajarn has had 28 Masters pass on their knowledge, and he hopes that more teachers will come forward in the future. It is considered possible to study from a total of 32 Masters (which relates to the components of the human body) but then an Ajarn has to stop, or it can cause death because the body becomes overloaded.

For a period of time, Ajarn Ting studied under a Karen Master (The Karen are one of the hill tribes of Thailand and Burma), but Karen magic is strange because they worship ghosts in a different way to the Lanna people. It is necromancy, but in the style of a Mhor Phi ('Spirit Doctor' and therefore no Buddhist influence), and they produce very few amulets. Karen magic is for both helping and harming others, but they are extremely secretive because if found harming others, they could be killed by the people in their village. Causing harm to others also has consequences for the magician, who will face many obstacles in life, misfortune, unsuccessful businesses

and worse. It has been important for Ajarn to learn many of the skills of the darker side of the regional magic traditions, because it is then possible to combat its effects in its victims.

Burmese magic is mainly about building the practitioner's qualities through specific forms of meditation, yantra construction and the strict holding of the five precepts. A practitioner must not have an affair, consume alcohol, eat beef or buffalo, not lie or cheat and of course, must not kill anything. Following the precepts is cleansing and the purifying of the self to show our determination to both the spirits and the Masters (and here Ajarn means the Masters both dead and alive) to aid any wishes to come true. In the Burmese system, there are groups of what the Thais see as Rishi (The Weikza), and they are spirits that can come and visit any practitioner of the art, an energy source that can be tapped. In life, they had their tongue and mouth tattooed to enable them to communicate freely to their Luksit, even after what is regarded as their mortal death.

Much of the Burmese magic of the cult that Ajarn Ting is a member of is directed towards blessings and countering the spells of others, something that the Sui Yin Jor Wicha is renowned for. Ajarn has also studied the Wicha of a deva called Mae Surasatee, but this is usually for great fortune, Metta and intelligence (Mae Surasatee is a Burmese Deva who is depicted as riding a swan, and Ajarn Ting is currently building a shrine in honour of this Deva). This Wicha does not deal with ghosts, and the products from this deva are mostly potions, and mixtures of Wahn and oils; pure white magic for helping or healing people only. The Wahn from this sect is constructed in the shape of a Chedi, which is different from the cult of Ajarn Saya Boon Khong, whose Wicha has more varieties of mixtures. Only a person of high virtue can construct many of the potions from the Sui Yin Jor Wicha, and Ajarn freely admits that he is not at that level yet.

Ajarn Nahn Ting has reached the level with the Burmese Wicha to be able to have his two index fingers tattooed, which reflects an old Burmese proverb that says, 'Two Fingers Are Medicine'. The finger on the right hand is used against evil spirits, as well as dipping into the water to bless it, whereas the index finger on the left hand is for treating poison. The Rishi (or Weikza) associated with the lineage of the Sui Yin Jor sect tattooed their tongues and mouths to enable them to communicate to the three worlds, which in Western culture would be hell, the earth and the heavens. This sect has four principle Guardians, who can be summoned by a devotee to aid them in the removal of evil spirits through exorcism. The study of this Wicha is different for men and women, with five levels of study for women but nine for men, and when each level is achieved, a tattoo is added to the mouth. People who have reached the top level are the Burmese equivalent of an Ajarn, who can then be guided by and talk freely with his immortal Masters.



56. Offerings to Ajarn's Masters and the Weikza, seeking their help with a ritual.



57. A symbol of the cult that Ajarn Ting is a member of.



58. And the same tattoo on the right hand of Ajarn.



59. 'Two fingers are medicine' - one for blessing water and one for treating poison.

Ajarn Ting - Exorcist

To perform an exorcism using the Burmese system, Ajarn has to check whether the afflicted person has been possessed by a ghost, or if they have been attacked using black magic. The first thing to do is to have them lie down and after chanting kata, command them to lift their arms or legs. If they have been possessed or attacked, their body will feel so heavy that they are unable to do it. This ritual will only be performed after first asking the person if they are truly seeking help in the hope that they have no scepticism regarding the exorcism. The next action is to summon the spirits of the Masters of the Wicha to come to their aid.

In some cases, the first sign of possession can be seen because the person will be reluctant to walk in the Samnak, or they will cry when they see Ajarn. The process of the exorcism is to chant the correct kata, call on the Masters for help and to shower them with blessed water, but the time taken to achieve success depends on the case and there may be the need for return visits. The person will also need to drink the holy water, which is made by mixing it with herbs and summoning the Masters to bless the water. Once the ghost or the black magic leaves the body, the person will feel numb in the tips of their fingers and toes. After this ritual, they will be asked to stop eating meat, take the five precepts and have a Sak Yant using an oil that contains herbal mixtures on their head or body for protection. This tattoo is barely noticeable as it is just five dots, sharply administered to a specific region of the head.

Ajarn Ting - Undertaker

Ajarn Nahn Ting is a traditional Lanna style undertaker, who often gives his services for free, depending on the situation with the family concerned. The knowledge an undertaker must possess is ancient and rarely documented, but Ajarn is keen to talk about his calling, to share it with the world. In this way, people can have a better understanding of both the culture of the region and the roles taken on by the Lanna people. During this description, particular reference will be made towards the products of a funeral that Ajarn can use within the magical system, which depends on the age, sex and manner of death of the deceased.

The first thing to do with a funeral is to prepare the body for the ceremony itself. The corpse is tied with enchanted thread (Sai Sin), which is applied in loops, the number of which represents the attachments in life and the concerns of the dead. The loops are around the neck, hands and feet and this ritual is called Mat Tra Sang. The threads around the neck represent the concerns of the person towards their children, very much in the way a young child will hold their parent round the neck while being carried. The second is the loop around the hands (which are in a Wai) that represents holding hands with their partner or lover, be they deceased or living. The last loop

is around the feet, and represents their concerns for money, belongings, property and possessions. All these concerns can block the path of the spirit and stop it from moving on. These actions come from a Buddhist riddle that says that one cannot be free unless they are able to let go of the three attachments. In practical terms, the tying of these loops helps hold the body in place during the start of decomposition. *(Please note that Ajarn Nahn Ting does funerals for the rural poor, who do not embalm due to the cost involved)*

After the tying of the loops of the three parts, which is all one thread, the body is then taken outside the coffin to be held by the monks during the funeral service in the hope that the dead person will receive virtue. Before the cremation itself, the undertaker will wash the dead one last time with coconut water that has to come from freshly broken shells. These shells will then be tossed away and watched to see whether they land face up or face down, which can indicate whether the dead person still has worries or not and if so, the washing is repeated.

In some areas, there is also a ritual called Rod Nam Sop, which lets family members pour water on to the dead body's hand as one last goodbye before Mad Tra Sang and putting the body in the coffin. In some Lanna traditions, the Rod Nam Sop ritual will be omitted, and the Undertaker will give the body shower with Sompoi instead. *(Being showered with Sompoi is akin to a ritual cleanse to remove negative elements)*

Another ritual performed over the corpse is called Bang Sakul Tai, which is to aid the spirit of the deceased to move on, but this ritual can also be useful to the living who believe that they are afflicted with unusually bad luck. In this case, the Bang Sakul Tai ritual is used to trick the spirits afflicting that person to think that the person is dead in the hope that they cease affecting their lives. Following this, another ritual called Bang Sakul Pen is enacted to spiritually 'bring them back to life', as if born again without any bad luck or illnesses. *(Please note that this is a version of the ceremony that is used to construct a new spirit body within an amulet)*

During the ceremony, the undertaker will make an offering to land spirits to ask for permission from them to proceed and to request their help to allow the spirit of the dead to pass on peacefully *(akin to opening the gates for them to leave)*. Two offerings are given at this point, which contains food and tobacco. One is underneath a big tree for the land spirits and the second offering to Pu Dam and Yaa Dam, the spirits of the crematorium. In Lanna beliefs, Pu Dam and Yaa Dam are the spirits associated with the stove, house spirits who protect the property and family members. People often pray to Pu Dam and Yaa Dam to protect their home while they are away and they are also the spirits associated with kilns and crematoriums; anything to do with the action of burning.



60. A cremation with Ajarn Ting.
Here, the relatives of the deceased carry the coffin to the cremation pit.



61. Ajarn Ting breaking a coconut over the face of the deceased.



62. The top of the funeral construction is then placed over the coffin to both hold the heat in and provide extra fuel.



63. The funeral flag that is carried in front of the coffin.



64. Ajarn pierces the intestines to aid burning and this bamboo then becomes a very useful form of Prai if it has been used with the right body source.



65. The Sai Sin thread that has been used during funerals.

During the procession to take the funeral to the place of burning (which is outside, in a graveyard, not in a temple), the funeral cortege is lead by a handmade flag. The flag has three tails (Ajarn said that the middle tail of the three holds strong Saneah), into which the undertaker places the spirit of the dead person. Depending on the manner of death, some Ajarns will use these flags to write a spell on and use as the wick for a magic candle as they have become supernatural, strengthening the magic undertaken. The flags of a Phi Tai Hong ghost of young people are the most useful in magic rather than those from an old person because of the strength of the spirit involved. The Sai Sin thread that emerges from the coffin of a Phi Tai Hong can also be used for a myriad of purposes but is especially beneficial with forms of candle magic that use a ghost.

There is a great difference when burning the body outdoors rather than in a crematorium, where they use gas as a burning medium. In the traditional way we use hay and wood, and the intestines have to be opened up as they contain a lot of water and the body can pop or not burn well. Ajarn Ting uses a bamboo stick to pierce the body at this time, and the intestines ooze out during the burning. This bamboo can then be used to make a Paladkhik, a very effective Hoon Payon, or for extreme forms of black magic if the body has come from what is known as a Prai Death, a death that produces supernatural qualities.

The body only takes two or three hours to burn fully, which is quicker than using a gas oven. Sometimes, a relative will hope to see that a strong Yant that the deceased wore may have survived the burning process but as an undertaker, Ajarn is trained to remove the power of any Yants before cremating the body. This action is a part of the ritual where Ajarn breaks a coconut above the face of the deceased, and kata are used to remove any magic that the person may hold. The coconuts used in this way become Athan, and they can be used to mix into a See Pung. There is also the belief that people who grind their teeth when asleep should eat the flesh of that coconut to make it stop.

Ajarn often performs his undertaking for free, and is a service that he offers to poor people in his district south of Chiang Mai. The relatives of the dead are giving Ajarn the responsibility for their loved one, to take care of that person on their last journey, and this is a duty that Ajarn Ting takes pride in performing.

The Coconut Hammer of an Undertaker

This hammer was given to him by an old undertaker, and it is for breaking the coconuts so that the juice can fall on to the face of the dead person. The hammer is now considered to be Athan as it has performed this task hundreds of times, and the handle is inscribed with Akhara that are spells for protection. Ajarn Ting uses it for every funeral, and its power of it grows

every time as the hammer is blessed for each service. The top of the hammer is also equipped with a claw to remove the nails from a coffin, and each action will again increase its power. This hammer has been used for hundreds of cremations and is around 60 years old. The photo opposite is of the coconut hammer with the spells along the shaft.

The Miit Mhor of Ajarn Nahn Ting

This Miit Mhor has a wide array of metals mixed into the blade, which include 7 Takrut sheets from 7 renowned Ajarns from different regions of the country, metal from a stupa, door furniture from a Wat (hinges, nails), various forms of mercury, Leklai and Lek Nam Phi. Kata was recited throughout the process of melting the metal and making it into a blade. This Miit Mhor was not scripted when Ajarn Ting received it, because the Master who made it said that this should be done by the Ajarn who wields it. The blade contains an Athan Heart kata called Hua Jai Khut, making it usable for anything concerning strong supernatural sources, such as creating a Nam Man Prai, cutting bodies etc. The wood for the knife came from the Wat of the renowned monk, Luang Phor Derm with one side having a carved Lersi and the other a Yak called Yan San Taa, of which ghosts are very afraid.

There is a process for making every different aspect of this knife, and many Ajarns added their skills and knowledge in its construction, making it a collective effort to aid the work of Ajarn Ting.

Many Ajarns coming together to help a fellow adept is an aspect of the magicians of this region that may surprise outsiders. It is part of the tradition to help each other, to support the work of others, and periodically pass on knowledge to the right people. The Ajarns of Chiang Mai are all part of a group, and they often meet in support of making an amulet together; usually for a local cause like building a school. It's quite intense to be present when they are all working together, using their Samathi and psyche but afterwards, the friendliness is charming. Seeing Ajarn Ting at these meetings is always a pleasure because Ajarn is a good man, happy with life.

The Shrine of Mae Surasatee - an interview with Ajarn Nahn Ting

Mae Surasatee is an angelic Nat from Burma and she is praised as the guardian of the Tripitaka, the Buddhist scriptures. She is easily recognised by her appearance as a beautiful lady sat on a golden swan holding the scriptures in her hand. Her original statue is in Burma's highest temple, Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon and she is also the goddess of wisdom, knowledge and charm; linking her to the source of her existence, the Indian goddess of Saraswati. People often make wishes to her and they believe that if they praise her, everything will be okay. Her shrines in Burma are often full of students seeking help when taking their exams, and she is thought of as the deity to seek help from when things get rough.



66. *The undertakers hammer of Ajarn Ting.*



67. Ajarn Ting at his shrine to Mae Surasatee.



68. And his fearsome Miit Mhor.



69. The shrine of Mae Surasatee with magic candles on the day of Ajarn's Wai Kru.

The Burmese image is of her riding on a swan, but Ajarn decided to change the Burmese style swan into a golden swan from Thai mythology (which marks the usual adaptation of ideas that travel between the local cultures). This type of image is used in Royal Thai Brahman ceremonies, as well as on the prow of some of the Royal barges.

Ajarn only gives two different styles of Sak Yant for Mae Surasatee even though there are 12 that can be applied to the skin, because some of the images are not as beneficial as others. The first one is usually placed on the upper spine and is constructed using only Akhara, whereas the second one is more recognisable as being her as it contains the swan. The first one is for Saneah and Metta and the second one is for Maha Amnat, a natural authority in life. For the people who have her tattoo, they should sometimes put perfume on the Yant as she likes beautiful scents, and scent can also be placed on any amulets in her honour. Ajarn himself praises her by lighting scented incense, candles and offers fresh flowers as well as bananas, coconuts and honey. If someone has a locket, they should also follow this way, but if residing outside Thailand, any fruit or flower is acceptable.

Ajarn became a follower of Mae Surasatee because he made a request to her during the building of his Samnak. He had little money at that time and promised that if she helped him get the funds he needed, he would build a shrine in her honour. Slowly but surely, the recognition as a good Lanna Ajarn came, allowing the fulfilment of his promise to her, building her shrine as a show of devotion and thanks. Mae Suarasatee is now becoming quite well known and is gaining Thai followers as many people know of her wish-granting capabilities. Ajarn Ting is now making amulets to her that are constructed using magical mixtures from Burma, including the herbal mix of the seven angels, herbs that protect against evil spirits and herbs that are specifically for Mae Surasatee. Ajarn believes that because of her, now many people come to visit the Samnak from many countries in Asia and even the West.

The Burmese Occult - An Interview with Ajarn Sala Boon Khong

As with many Ajarns, the first question to Ajarn Sala Boon Khong about the history of the Burmese Occult brought a comical reaction, with him saying that as he is not thousands of years old, he cannot say for sure. Everyone has a different opinion about the history, and there are no scholarly works to reference on this subject. It is like trying to write the history of eating food with your hands in this region as the rules for politeness and conduct differ from the North, the South, the central areas and Esan but it was more likely that they had no spoons. Depending on the people of each region, how they accept any information or 'way' differs, and it varies because of the way it mixes with what was there before. Burma and Thailand can be considered to have 'co-cultures' and finding the roots of this shared history is almost impossible.

One type of Yant in Burma is known as an *In*. In Thailand, they do not eat Yantra but in Burma, they are consumed; eaten on the right day and at the right time. To perform this action involves many precepts so it is something that Ajarn Sala Boon Khong has avoided because if he cannot keep the necessary precepts, it could send him into madness. The process of eating Yants is a challenging practice, and not many Thai Ajarns have followed this way due to the strict rules. For instance, the people who are following the process of eating Yants can only eat once per day and have to sleep on a mat. Another type of Yant is a *Sama*, which is a picture constructed from Akhara, the script of Yantra but again, the way they make these differs from region to region. Long ago, the borders between the lands were either different from today or very porous, and without the rigidity of the current nation, information flowed freely.

Some of the aspects of Burmese magic are similar to the Thai system, although with knowing both systems, Ajarn Boon Khong considers Burmese Magic to be 90% unique. Most of the Thai magic came from the East (Laos and Cambodia) and the people's explorations, whereas the Burmese system remained closed to outsiders. Thailand has been open to commerce for a longer time and accepted the influence of others readily, such as the Lao people and the Khmers but their history with Burma has always been fractious. Burma also received what can be considered to be the real Ruesi from India, and they had more access to their core knowledge, whereas Thailand seemed to get a watered down version. The Lersi in Thailand today, look like they come from the images in movies rather than being the sages of old, who lived an ascetic, spiritual life without a wife.

When studying Burmese magic, the practitioner starts from a place that suits them; they do not need to move through the system from the witch up to the Master of the Higher Path. They do not need to study the malicious forms and can choose to do white magic alone to become a Master. There are many paths to become skilled at various aspects of Burmese magic, and those ways are chosen by the practitioner and his teachers.

Ajarn Sala Boon Khong is a Burmese Master, a *Saya* (but it is pronounced *Sayaa*) and Ajarn's name should be Ajarn *Saya* Boon Khong although he says that Ajarn Boon Khong is fine too. He decided to change it to Sala Boon Khong because Sala is the Tai Yai way to say 'Master'.

Ajarn Nahn Ting is a member of the congregation, or *Nikai*, *Sui Yin Jau* and each group praises or follows particular spiritual entities. Each *Nikai* has an associated and unique mixture of *Muan Sarn* that is either from the original holy man who made it or has been reproduced by the sect. When doing this, they may also mix some of the original *Muan Sarn* with the reproduced mixture and these mixtures are then used in the magic performed by each sect. This mix can be consumed for health as well as for spiritual purposes, or used as part of the oils and colour used for *Sak Yant*.



70. A fine photo Ajarn Boon Khong in front of his altar.



71. Ajarn Boon Khong blessing some amulets.

The statues on Ajarns altar are of some of the Masters praised by the various Nikai and are known as the Weikza. There is a belief that while they were real people, some of these Weikza can extend their lives for so long that they can disappear and the followers often do not know whether that Master is still living or has passed on. They enter into a different realm but are considered to be still alive, but everyone will pass on eventually. Ajarn Boon Khong actively connects to these entities to help with any magical work, which is very much like when visiting a beautiful place, it is easy to later go back there in the mind to experience the beauty of it again. In the same way, Ajarn can reconnect to the blessings given by the Weikza and pass them on through blessings, rituals, Sak Yant and constructed talismans. With these actions, Ajarn considers himself as a medium, through which these entities can send their power into the world. He freely admits to having never seen these entities manifest but that may be because Buddhist doctrine teaches that anything that manifests can be a trick of the mind, so Ajarn thinks that his attitude blocks this process.

The Weikza can be placed in categories depending on which part of the magical system they have been successful in. Some Weikza are associated with the making of *In* because it was through expertise in that medium that they became a Weikza. Another type is a Seh Weikza, who attained Mastery through the use of herbs and creating Muan Sarn. The Weikza do not need to be experts in all the disciplines within the magical system of Burma, attaining Mastery in one is enough. If the Master of one aspect of the Burmese system then wanted to study another discipline, it would be essential to forget everything learned and practised and started again from scratch. Otherwise, the Wicha involved can work against each other and be dangerous.

Ajarn Boon Khong has studied the high forms of Burmese magic but is also still involved in the making of Prai with the lower spirits, because of the personal belief that his knowledge of working with Prai is not complete. There is a split in Ajarns works but like any person, Ajarn has to make a living to be able to eat, enjoy his life and follow his spiritual calling. Ajarn Sala Boon Khong has created a unique path of working with and studying the magic of Burma, Laos and the Lanna region, producing both exceptional Prai talismans and high spiritual magic.

The Datlon

(or Taat-lung the way Ajarn pronounces it. This is the Thai version of the name and the meaning of it refers to their alchemical nature)

A Datlon is a talisman made from a metal amalgam that is highly valued in Myanmar, with prices of a few thousand dollars for the best ones being the norm. These are virtually unknown in the West, and this interview marks one of the first with a person who has knowledge on the subject, Ajarn Sala Boon Khong. Ajarn is currently studying the process of making a Datlon.

In the olden days, the alchemists in Burma used mercury in an attempt to find the elixir of life to extend their lives beyond what is possible, which is an activity that came directly from India. The renowned Weikza, Bo Bo Aung got the original Wicha from the lands to the West and translated the 'way' to construct the elixir. Bo Bo Aung is considered to be the creator of the Weikza movement and was born in the 18th century.

The process of making Datlon can be considered analogous to the meditation method called Kasin, which is a meditation with flame or candlelight, in that both are an analogy to the process of trying to burn away desire. The Datlon represents the body of the person going through the process of being purified, and these things have considerable power. In the mercury, the process of purification drives away the poisonous nature of the element and replace it with an amalgam that can hold the same spiritual energy as the purified devotee. This knowledge spread out from Burma, and there is an example where a Chinese Lord came to Burma for the wisdom to extend his life, but he died from mercury poisoning, as many people do. The knowledge never came to Thailand as the Thais rejected it, believing that their culture already held everything they needed.

In magic, there are different branches of knowledge and Alchemy is one of them, with magicians often using metals like gold, silver and copper but in Burma they use Mercury. The making of a Datlon is a complicated process to study, and Ajarn Boon Khong is in the process of acquiring the knowledge, but it is a very costly exercise due to the materials involved to make a single Datlon. By working with the alchemy of mercury the magicians are attempting to discover how to extend the lifespan, hopefully to the point where they can meet the 5th and final incarnation of the Buddha. To make a Datlon, the Ajarn is working as a blacksmith but with added Samathi throughout the whole process, the correct kata during various stages and all tied to the breath of the practitioner. The practice also builds the Samathi and at the same time, it can be seen as akin to the magical goal of changing lead into gold. They already use mercury in Myanmar as both a remedy for ailments and to make their red inks but in both cases, the poisonous nature of the ore has been driven off.

The makers will keep the best Datlon, and with others, they will turn them into rings and pass them on to devotees. The people who obtain these are usually looking for very high attributes, not just things like Chok Laap or good fortune. It may sound odd, but the best ones of these can raise the person in the spiritual realm to become a divine being, from where they can decide their own fate and destiny. There are some that also claim that a good Datlon can help bring supernatural qualities such as levitation, although Ajarn says that he has never come across anyone that can actually levitate (*laughter*).

Comparing Lanna and Burmese Magic - an interview with Ajarn Piyasitti

Please read this interview very carefully as Ajarn Piya explains one of the core practices within the Lanna system that is virtually unknown to the outside world. In each Ajarn's Samnak there is a strange offering near his altar but up to this point, it has been difficult to both pose the correct question to find out what it is and get the Ajarn to open up about their use.

To compare magical systems is difficult to compose and the only way to do it is to talk about the magic Ajarn Piyasitti himself performs because there are many different lineages in each system and they all have a different Wicha. There are three choices of magic to compare, the central Thai, the Lanna and the magic from Myanmar. The magic from central Thailand is derived from the knowledge of Cambodia. To the north of this regional magic there is Laos and the old nation of Lanna (*Laan Naa*, the land of a million rice fields) and to the West is Burma or Myanmar. These regions are akin to three separate melting pots of magical knowledge, and then there is the Khmer influenced region although there is, of course, some overlap of ideas. The Wicha of Laos has differences from the Wicha of Lanna, and again, from the Wicha of Myanmar, and within each region are lineages being propelled forwards through the work of talented Kruba Ajarns. So in each land, there are similar forms of magic that use different methods, kata and rituals to the same ends. The magic of the Lanna region and Myanmar is quite close, because the old state of Lanna was under the control of the Burmese people for around 200 years, although there are still some distinct differences.

While there are lineages of knowledge within the Lanna system that come from generations of talented Masters, in Burma it is different and the Masters that people follow there are either in a group of 10 or a group of 5 (as with Ajarn Ting and Ajarn Sala Boon Khong). Within the Wicha of these Masters, there is both black and white magic but much of the power is passed on by the Masters themselves. Ajarn Piya follows the 5 Masters - Sai Prachao Ha Pra Ong - and another old Master called Orataa, of whom there are two statues on the altar, one in gold and one coloured but both showing a bearded man with long hair and crossing his legs in a unique fashion. Orataa is Ajarn Piya's Master even though Orataa has been dead for centuries, but Ajarn Piya's teacher, Ajarn Maeyo in Mandalaya is a member of the lineage. The magic of Orataa is for fortune telling, healing and dark magic, but all for helping the people. It might sound odd to have the dark magic for helping others but sometimes it is the only way to combat what afflicts them.

Ajarn Piyasitti has been studying the magic of Myanmar for five years now. Before that, there was Cambodian magic and originally, Lanna magic but now Ajarn's direction has changed, which is part of the development of any magician. Ajarn Piyasitti is also a Saya, a Master like Ajarn Sala Boon

Khong and to become a Master depends on your practice of meditation. The five Weikza Masters help with everything related to these studies; the teaching, the Wicha and the power of the magic, as does Master Orataa.

In Lanna magic, an Ajarn relies on what he refers to as the 'Master Ghost'. In the corner of the Samnak is Ajarn Piya's Master Ghost, surrounded by the relevant offerings and the white material can contain a skull, depending on the lineage. Ajarn Piya was a Luksit to Ajarn Deycha Rangsee, and during every new year celebration the material around the Master Ghost has to be changed. The Lanna system is taught in stages, starting with level 5, then 8, 12, 32, 36 and finally 108, all of which are levels of Wicha. To rise through the levels depends on both yourself and the Master Ghost, who will test and check all the innate abilities present before allowing the Luksit to continue, otherwise, it can be dangerous for the apprentice. The Master Ghost tests the Luksit all the time and if a mistake is made it will restrict any progress until that mistake is corrected. If a Luksit works diligently, practices and believes in what is being done, the Master ghost will bring great fortune to life and make it very smooth.

For everything done in the Lanna system as an Ajarn, be it black magic in a graveyard or whatever, the Ajarn prays to the Master Ghost first to ask for success in that endeavour. The difference with the Myanmar magic is that the help is regarded as human rather than being a Master ghost because these old Masters (*the Weikza*) are still considered to be alive and active. They are more akin to a Buddha rather than being a ghost.

There are two types of Master in Myanmar, one high and one low. The lower Masters are the ones who make the black magic and the higher Masters follow a higher spiritual path. Only the low Masters make things like Panneng and deal with ghosts, or in the Burmese case, Nats, which consist of land spirits, Phi Tai Hong ghosts and forms of black magic. The Nats are given offerings in a similar way to the ghosts of the Lanna system, but the offerings to the Masters is vegetarian, usually fruit like bananas, coconuts, etc. The white magic in Myanmar, the higher spiritual path is one of intense meditation, and people either wear white or are monks. Many people will study the low forms of magic before rising but some are happy to stay with the darker arts, it all depends on the practitioner.

For anyone who wants to study either Lanna or Myanmar magic, it is essential to study with a Master. The teaching of a true Master is necessary to learn how to help the people, how to work with the ghosts and deities, how to write and understand Yantra and Wicha; there are so many things to study. A problem in the present day is that people think that they can learn magic from a book and not have a Master, which is totally wrong. Yes, eventually, after years of study with Masters a person can acquire enough practical knowledge to make it possible to learn from books but everyone needs a good Master to help form the foundation of magic within, which



72. The Lanna 'Master Ghost' of Ajarn Piyasitti.



73. The Khan Kru is in the top left of the photograph, above Ajarn Suea, who is performing the Korb Sian ritual for Khun Leon.

can then be built on. Once the Master is inside the Luksit, the Master can then help with the understanding of any book or Wicha. The Master helps with contacting the ghosts, the devas and the spirits and is the guide to becoming a magician. Meditation is the key to all this as it bestows the sensitivity necessary to be able to bond with the Master to receive help and become successful at magic.

Ajarn Piya has learned from many Ajarns from many regions and even from a man within his family, who was a member of a lineage of black magicians in this region. If an Ajarn studies enough it is possible to tell what is good or not, what is real or not and being an Ajarn gives the freedom to follow the magical path in any chosen way. The important thing is to know the self and know the quality of magic. At this time, Ajarn Piya places great faith in the Burmese style of fortune telling as well as blessing rituals, both of which he considers highly effective.

The Khan Kru - an interview with Ajarn Suea

Ajarn Suea is a Lanna Ajarn from an ancient lineage and interviewing him concerning this aspect of the Lanna system was a joy. Th Khan Kru is what Ajarn Piyasitti referred to as 'The Master Ghost' but please remember here that Ajarn Suea was a monk for a long time and his Master was also a monk, so some of the rules are different.

The Lanna Khan Kru in the Samnak is considered to be a representation of the Master of the Ajarn, and every Lanna Ajarn must have a similar item from their teacher. The Khan Kru are passed down to the disciples of the Kruba Ajarn, and there are levels of receiving the Khan that mark the Luksit's journey through the essential studies of the art. There is Khan 8, Khan 10, Khan 12, Khan 24, Khan 36 and then finally, Khan 108, which is the highest level attainable. Each level has different meanings, and at each stage, the Luksit is allowed to perform certain Wicha. The Khan 8 marks the time spent practising the prescribed precepts, Khan 12 is the beginning level to becoming an Ajarn and finally, the Khan 108, which is also called the Khan Luang, is only available for people that have held the 227 precepts of a monk at some time in their life. If a Luksit receives the Khan Luang (The Golden Khan), it means that his Master has already passed on all the knowledge held by the Kruba Ajarn. Ajarn Suea's Master is Kruba Duang Dee, who is a very important monk, and devotees respect Ajarn Suea as the holder of Kruba's Wicha.

The Khan Kru contains betel nut, white cloth for a teacher who has passed away or red for one that is still alive. There are also flowers, alcohol (rice wine is good, but Ajarn said that the stronger it is, the greater the power that can be accessed and Ajarn Suea has a locally made bootleg liquor), crispy rice, candles, incense and other items. The Khan 12 is for the knowledge of Saneah, Metta and Maha Niyom. If a Luksit wants to study Sak Yant and candle magic with Ajarn Suea, he has to reach the level of Khan 24 before

being taught. The Khan 24 has to be presented to Ajarn to get the knowledge but to be able to practice it; the Luksit has to return the following year with the Khan Kru 36 or Khan Ruesi. At different levels, the appearance of the Khan Kru may look the same, but other items are present. The Khan 108 is the highest available to an Ajarn but there is also a Khan 227 for monks, but if that monk then became a layperson, that Khan 227 has to be given back to be replaced with the Khan 108.

The Khan is a representation of the Ajarns Master, and it acts as a reminder of the knowledge given, the promises made regarding behaviour, such as never dishonouring the Master's name and holding to the precepts that were given. Even though it may seem that the Khan Kru may not hold much power, they are a force within the practices of an Ajarn as they can call on the Khan Kru to get the help of the Master with rituals and also for advice.

There is another type of Khan called the *Khan Phi Kru*, which is now rarely seen. The Khan Phi Kru is the skull of an Ajarn which is passed down the lineage to a disciple. This type of Khan Kru is usually from a Master that is not a monk. It is placed on the altar, often under a Lersi mask or kept in a white cloth bound with string (see opposite photograph). If an Ajarn has one of these skulls, they tend to be more on the side of black magic, some to the point where they cannot pay their respects to a monk or the Buddha any more. There was a man in this village who had this type of magic, and as he aged it became essential to stop using this magic and go back to Buddhism or the power can kill an older person.

Burmese Fortune Telling - an interview with Ajarn Piyasitti

There is a fortune telling system in Thailand, but it is not the same as the Burmese system. Anyone can study Thai fortune telling in Bangkok, and a certificate is available with about six months of study. Everything is taught by a teacher, almost like a science subject. The course will give great knowledge about how the position of the stars and astrology affects the life, but there is no magic involved there. The fortune telling system Ajarn Piya follows comes from a Burmese Master of magic.

It is not easy to explain, but the Burmese Fortune Telling uses the psychic abilities that are gained through extensive meditation practice to help a person change their lives. An often posed question is whether this system came to Burma from one of their primary sources of knowledge, but no, this is not Indian in origin, it is a purely Burmese system. Myanmar Masters created it. Some of the practices in Burmese magic have other effects on the mind, and one of those is a psychic ability to know others, sincerely and truly. With the extended study of various meditation techniques, an Ajarn can get an understanding of the way that others think, a side effect of high meditation known since the time of the Buddha and the Burmese Masters use this to help people.



74. A rare example of a Khan Phi Kru, tied in this way when the Ajarn wants some peace and quiet.



75. The confident Ajarn Piyasitti.

When people visit Ajarn for this, yes, their name and birthday have to be given and studied using a form of numerology that is very complex (see photo), and this takes around 30 minutes. This numerology influences the course of action, but then it is essential to talk with the devotee because this technique is not for deciding if it is, for example, an excellent time to do business or when to marry someone, this is for life, for the whole of the person's life. Burmese Fortune Telling concentrates on the character of the person because if it is possible to repair or redirect someone's character, their existence will change for the better. There are also some rituals involved here, and these rituals are made to restore the person and improve their lives. Everything is possible.

The central part of the ritual for this type of fortune telling is a big blessing, which also involves the ingestion of exceptional herbs and Muan Sarn that has come from the Masters, and these are their original formulas. As with the magical system, these are mixtures for the spirit rather than for the health and sometimes the red powder that originates from cinnabar is also used, although the poison has been removed. Sak Yant are also sometimes used during this blessing, but they are to bless the person, or for health and the actions are decided on during the ritual itself, which also includes periods where the Ajarn and the devotee meditate and pray together. Some Sak Yant may be applied during the ceremony and some at the end to seal the changes and protect the person. In the photograph of the stamps for these Sak Yant, the lower one is for ladies, the one on the right is for men, and the other two are to make Yantra on paper for eating, which is sometimes necessary too. The amount of Yantra eaten depends on the level of the practitioner and the reason for consuming the Yant. There may also be a prescribed period of only eating vegetarian food and abstaining from sex to help the ritual work effectively.

The function of the Burmese Fortune Telling from Ajarn Piya is to cleanse the body and the mind, thoroughly and comprehensively with the aim that the fortune will change because the person has changed.

Candle Magic - an interview with Ajarn Aek

It was difficult to decide who to interview concerning candle magic as most Lanna Ajarns make magic candles. In the end, other Ajarns suggested that Ajarn Aek would be best, which expresses the strength of community here as everyone wants everyone else included in this project. The knowledge of the forms of candle magic is enormous and should realistically be covered in a single volume rather than being a part of this book.

There is extensive knowledge in the Lanna region for the making of candle magic, which has been passed down through the generations but the origin of the magic itself is unknown as it is ancient. In the Lanna culture, the lighting of candles is part of many rituals and ceremonies, including ones

for healing and bringing couples together and with these rituals, each candle spell is constructed differently. Some had to use an exact weight of wax, others burned in specific places, and some had to contain other items; the range of the knowledge involved here is quite incredible. There is also a vast amount of specific Wicha for each candle type, including the number of threads in the wick, how to construct the Yantra spell and whether that spell is rolled with the wick so the beeswax covers them both. The spell can also be wrapped around the outside of the candle, allowing it to be seen.

For certain types of candle magic, there has to be 37 threads in the wick, and in other types, the amount is related to the age of the client who is going to use the candle. Each thread consists of Sai Sin, which holds the power of a blessing in a temple (these are the non-Prai types, Puttakhun magic). Long ago, people would have collected cotton from the cotton bush and woven that into a thread, but nowadays, everyone uses Sai Sin thread as there is a power within that thread that is used to help the magic. There are also candle Wicha that requires the number of threads to be related to aspects of the Buddhist scriptures. If it is a candle for healing, it is lit at the head of the bed, and the person would lie down until the candle has finished burning. Candles are made for students who want to pass their exams, candles to help with uppity land spirits and pretty much anything you can think of, showing how deep this magic is within the Lanna culture.

There are thousands of types of candle magic, and an Ajarn is able to adapt the magic to fit with a devotees request from the knowledge held within him. Ajarn Aek specialises in the making of candles for Sadau Kloh (to turn around bad fortune), Sueb Cha Daa (to renew or prolong good destiny/fate, like Serm Duang), Noohn Duang Cha Daa (boosting the destiny/fate) as well as Phra Sivalee candles, Sang Ka Jai candles and Phra Upakut candles, which are all candles to deities. Phra Sivalee is an idol for good luck, trade and business with the attribute of Khaa Khaay. Sang Ka Jai represents fertility, wisdom and bounty. Phra Upakut is for protection against malicious spirits and then once removed, the candle will also call for better things to come to life. Candle Wicha is complex magic. Ajarn Aek's love candles are the most popular, and there are now also moulded candles in many styles, for Rahu, the Lersi, Inn Khoo, and Phi Suea, so many types and they are particularly popular with the Chinese people. If an Ajarn has good knowledge, the candle Wicha he uses cannot be categorised as the maker decides what goes into the spell. During the process of mastering this Wicha, there arises a vast range of magic candles for every purpose. It is a fluid and beautiful magic.

In the Lanna tradition, when people feel their luck turning or are feeling down, they will often light a magic candle. The generic candles will not have any name or birthday in there (this is a bespoke service which produces strongly directed magic) but the instructions will tell the best time of day it is to be lit and the location. The time depends on the time zone where a



76. Ajarn blessing a pile of candles purchased for friends.



77. Candles that contain spells for Rahu are a particular favourite. These come as a typical candle type or one of the more fancy molded versions.



78. Ajarn Aek comes up with some cool designs for his magic candles.



79. The industrious Ajarn Aek!

person lives, not the time in Thailand; it is the time of day where the person is that is important. Sometimes, when lighting a particular type of candle, a kata must also be spoken, and the amount of kata varies, all depending on the purpose of the candle.

One of the most famous rituals is for Ajarn Aek to make and burn a candle for devotees for a specific purpose, burned at the correct time to give the best chance for that magic to work. Usually, people will come and see Ajarn and arrange this or may also send him some personal information through the internet (name, birth date and sometimes day of birth will be written into the spell in the candle) and even some personal items if the Wicha dictates it. A picture is also essential for most types of personal magic using a candle and by that he means magic performed by Ajarn Aek for a devotee and directed towards a specific person. The handmade candle is lit above the picture of the object person, and Ajarn focusses on that person when chanting the kata. The person who brought the ritual does not need to be present, and they do not need to make any action during the ceremony, Ajarn is doing all the work. Some clients request a video especially for them, but Ajarn generally videos the rituals being done anyway and shares the video on the web. These rituals are made on the best night, chosen astrologically, and many candle rituals will be performed on the same night at the optimum time. Choosing the best day and time gives the spell the best chance of working.

Magic works the best when the person who brought the request believes wholeheartedly in the power of the magic.

Ajarn Aek, February, 2018.

Most of the candle rituals performed are for love and binding couples together, and in that case, the spell has blank spaces where their names are written. The names and birthdays of the people involved in the magic are also used with a ritual for those who want to equalise a relationship with someone dominant or to subjugate them, in which case it is a Kom spell. These are active spells to control another person, and there are many types available. Ajarn Aek receives some bizarre requests for candle magic, but he often finds a way to help. Candles made for a specific purpose and sent directly to the customer have instructions as to where and when to light the candle. It is sometimes the case that a person wants to perform the ritual themselves rather than having Ajarn make it and Ajarn is cool with that.

In many ways Ajarn Aek is like a Doctor for the spirit of his devotees, helping them with whatever they need to help improve their lives, Chok Laap, Maha Niyom, Metta, Saneah, whatever they need. Ajarn has had some highly unusual requests with candle magic, even from people who want to kill others but Ajarn does not do that sort of thing, it is too terrible for him. Yes, there are many forms of Wicha to kill people with candle magic but not by Ajarn Aek, he does not want that burden in life as he is too busy being happy.

Candle Ritual 1 - for Serm Duang with Ajarn Aek

It is always good to see an Ajarn wanting to improve the services he offers as well as confirm his Buddhist practices by inviting monks to help with the evening's ritual. The ritual in the following photographs was a Puttakhun ritual (purely Buddhist magic) to raise the luck and good fortune of the people who had bought candles for this service and their names and birthdays were attached to each, about 35 in all. Throughout the ceremony, films were taken for many of the people who had decided to buy a candle for this purpose and have Ajarn work the best magic possible to help them in life. On this evening, Ajarn Aek performed his duties well, giving the magic involved the best chance of working. The ceremony was quite beautiful to witness and the chanting exemplary.

The ritual started with praising the Buddha, and the monks present before they began the evening's chanting to aid the luck of the devotees. Ajarn James also came along to help, as often happens in Chiang Mai where an Ajarn will take part in the rituals of another Ajarn to add their spiritual force to the proceedings. The candle magic, in this case, was Maha Chaiya Mongkhon, which translates as 'the greatest, most sacred victory', a spell that is specifically designed to raise the fortunes and change the luck of the people involved.



80. Each candle has been bought for the ritual by devotees in China.



81. Ajarn Aek lights the candles to begin the ceremony.



82. Each person present is holding the Sai Sin thread to combine their energies and aid the magic. A beautiful and well organised ritual by Ajarn.



83. Ajarn Apichai performing a Kom ritual on the ground where a body is cremated, in this case, the place where the feet would be.

Ajarn Apichai

There is something ancient in Ajarn Apichai. He is an exceptionally studious young man with great ability who's interest in the study of magic started as a child. It is always a pleasure to talk to Ajarn as his interviews are beautifully structured and pitched directly. Pay attention to what he says, there are some gems of knowledge in his interviews.

Ajarn's studies have included time with some very famous monks such as LP Saneah for the Wicha for Saneah and candle magic. Luang Phor Wanlop taught him his nine points of the body gold blessing and his gold face blessing. LP Naenkaew taught him his gold needle Wicha and the legendary Ajarn Subin is now tutoring him as well. There is going to be a lifetime of magic from Ajarn Apichai.

There is a full biography for Ajarn Apichai in The Thai Occult Sak Yant Book, so little is reproduced here and instead, let's dive straight in with Graveyard magic, a very juicy topic!

Graveyard Rituals - An Interview with Ajarn Apichai

These rituals use a written spell that is similar in format to those found in general candle magic, but here, an Ajarn will use a ghost to add a considerable amount of extra force to aid the request of the person who has asked him to perform a ritual on their behalf. An appeal was received by the author for Ajarn Apichai to cast a Kom spell, which is a type of magic that is used to reduce a person's power and there are many forms of this ceremony. As this was the first Kom ritual the author had brought to Ajarn, it ended up being quite an adventure!

Kom Rituals are performed to bring people under control by reducing their power, which gives a chance for a better balance with the person who requested the ceremony from the Ajarn. There are many forms of these rituals, with some using very dark magic, especially the more ancient types of curses that involved the use of animals to affect the object person. These actions are more akin to the practices of a Mhor Phi than a Buddhist Ajarn but the Lanna Ajarns will use the most suitable magic that has the best prospect of working. In this book, there is the space to only list a few of these Kom rituals to give the reader an idea of what they are and how they work, but in reality, there are probably enough for a book on their own.

For this ritual, the written spell for this magic is in the shape of a human being with the name of the object person on the chest. The paper is then inverted so the head of the victim is lower than their feet (turning good luck to bad or strength to weakness) and rolled with either 27 or 37 enchanted

threads. These threads form the wick and then it is rolled into a candle of pure beeswax (in this case red and yes, some rituals need a specific colour of wax). The number 27 is used because it is related to the movements of the moon during a year, but the choice of the number of threads also depends on the most auspicious time to attack the victim and the best time to boost the power of the recipient of the ritual. For Kom spells (Kom means 'controlling'), Ajarn needs the birth date and the day of birth of both parties to calculate the best astrological timing to make the ritual work in combination with strongly focussed intention. The timing of performing this ritual depends on the combination of a low ebb for the recipient of the spell and a more favourable period for the person who has made the request, all calculated through Thai astrological knowledge.

The ritual has to be performed in a graveyard to allow Ajarn to communicate directly with the chosen spirit and the best choice for this is either a soldier or policeman, because they are both used to being ordered and performing a requested task. Before this task, Ajarn first has to get the permission of the spirit that protects the graveyard by lighting 16 incense sticks and making an offering. It is like asking the boss for approval before doing some work. This request also has another purpose in that it calls the angels and the spirits below to watch and assist if it is necessary, akin to calling for aid from all the spirits of the area. Then, Ajarn started to communicate with the spirits present in the graveyard and ask if there are any spirits there who have the power to fulfil the request, offering them merit in return. At this point, Ajarn Apichai needs to keep an eye on the candles and the incense for any signs. If the spirits are not willing to help on that day, the incense or the candles will go out, and it is necessary to return home and check the best astrological time to perform the ritual once more. There can be absolutely no deviation from this action.

One aspect of the Kom spells to reduce someone's power is that they are performed on the floor of the cremation area in the position where the undertaker places the feet of the deceased. The feet are the lowest part of the spiritual body, which aids the reduction of the intended person's power akin to be put under the foot of a ghost. The actual spell is cast when Ajarn touches the floor, pulling the ghost to the task and when Ajarn is happy with the results, the photograph of the object person is burned and left on the floor. These rituals can be effective for up to six months, and the ghost will act when it is the best time to affect the person, waiting for when their guardian spirit is weak through either astrology or illness.

After the ceremony, Ajarn Apichai was 100% certain that this ritual would work because he said that he had chosen a good ghost for the job. When leaving the graveyard, Ajarn cleansed all those present using blessed water and requested that everyone takes an extra spiritual bath when home to ensure nothing had attached itself during the ritual.



84. With the graveyard spell for good fortune, Ajarn made this on the sides of the cremation pit and in the position where the head would be.



85. The photographs used in the ritual are always smudged to ensure discretion.

There are many graveyard rituals, such as for extreme Saneah, cursing, changing fortune or fate, bringing lovers or friends back together (which is the most popular request) and others. The same rituals are also made in a Wat or Samnak without the use of a ghost, and with those, Ajarn estimates that the success rate is around 65%, but in the graveyard, it would be 85 to 90%, purely because of the use of a spirit that acts for Ajarn to gain merit. It is like hiring them to do a job, and they will do anything to get the 'bribe' of merit. The risks of performing this ritual would be that if not done correctly, the spirit can come back to haunt Ajarn or the person who wanted to do the ritual. That's why every time before commencing with rituals of this type it is best to shower myself with blessed water and ensure every action within the ceremony is correct. To this point, no client has ever reported an ill effect from requesting a ritual in a graveyard.

The reason for asking clients if they wanted any rituals performing was because it is essential to test the efficiency of various types of graveyard spells. The response of the person who brought this action was unequivocal, and it took just a few days to show an effect.

Yes, there has been a change in the man, who is now more subdued in a way, it is very strange. It's difficult to explain it but it is there, it is akin to some sort of internal conflict. Whatever Ajarn did, it was the right magic for what this man needed to balance him and keep him under control. It is very impressive to see.

Ritual 2

In this case, the person requesting the ritual wanted to raise the fortunes with the specific request for increased windfall luck. Ajarn Apichai said that the best ritual would be for Chok Laap to raise his general good fortune, which relates to increased luck and opportunities in all aspects of life. This is a difficult spell to cast because it relies on the actions of the person who brought the ritual and if it was that easy, Ajarn would do this for himself and retire.

These spells are identical to the structure of the candle magic for luck, but with the graveyard version, Ajarn is attaching a ghost to pull the prospect of luck and good fortune to the intended person. Some people test this ceremony by going to the casino and betting like a crazy person but gambling is gambling, and casino's in Asia have protection from the actions of ghosts and Kuman Thong amulets. The best way to work with these spells is for the recipient to hold their Samathi and keep a focused eye on all the opportunities that may arise. This spell is cast on top of the side wall of the cremation area and at the position where the head would lie because it is a higher form of beneficial magic. In this case, the photograph is taken back to the Samnak and is kept on Ajarn's personal shrine for the duration that the spell will work. After the ceremony, Ajarn was confident that the ritual would be successful.

Ajarn Suea of Ban Fon

Ajarn Suea became interested in magic at a very young age due to being very scared of ghosts, and magic offers protection from them. As a child, he lived at the temple of Kruba Duangdee in the village of Ban Fon near to Chiang Mai, first as a temple boy at the age of 10. Kruba was a kind and in equal measure, a very strict Master, allowing no TV, and after 9pm all the lights were turned off. Kruba would tell stories about his Wicha, and the kata used most frequently, which was an excellent way to instruct a young man, and Ajarn absorbed everything. Kruba Duangdee introduced Ajarn Suea to local magicians to go and study magic with from the age of 13 as a Naen, a young monk and eventually, as a monk from the age of 21. All his formative years were with Kruba Duangdee, and Ajarn Suea now holds the full Wicha of this legendary Kruba, which is proven by Ajarn having the Khan Kru 108 in his Samnak.

Kruba Duangdee is now 105 years old and still resides at the temple but is unable to perform his duties due to his great age. Ajarn holds the Wicha book collection of Kruba Duangdee and appears to have a quite incredible memory for the contents of this extensive library of magical grimoires. This Wicha is exceptionally complex and follows many ancient ways of construction, which would again deserve a book in its own right.

A Graveyard Ritual for Love - An Interview with Ajarn Suea

Before a love ritual in a graveyard, a Kom ritual is often performed to attack that person's protective spirit (the Opatika) to weaken them and enable the love spell to work more effectively. There are many rituals of this type, where a magic candle is made and burned in certain places and the correct kata recited. A Kom ritual can be done with the candle placed between the toes, on a termite mound, under the stairs, where they cremate bodies in a graveyard and also in the cemetery toilet. The funny thing is that the local villagers have asked Ajarn Suea not to do the candle ritual in the toilet any more as it makes a mess, and that they cannot use it if a candle is burning.

While waiting to go to the graveyard, Ajarn Suea offered the people present food from the altar but not food that had been offered to ghosts, it was food to Phor Gae. Ajarn said that consuming food that has been given to the Lersi strengthens any Yants, Akhara or spells on the skin and makes the magic more solid. It was delicious and an excellent way to help protect from any malicious ghosts in the cemetery grounds.

The ritual tonight is called *Peng Pai*, and it is generally requested by ladies to tighten their relationship and bring their lover under their control. They give Ajarn the name of the object person, a piece of clothing, some of their hair and the birthday of both the lady and her lover. The Yant inside the candle has a picture of the man and woman, and it is folded so that the



86. The evening began with the ritual to reduce the object person's power.



87. The inside of a magic candle where the spell is wrapped with clothes or hair.



88. The offerings for the ghost, which includes pig's blood.



89. And with the ritual, the way the candle is stood and their position is important.



90. Ajarn slapping the side of the cremation pit to call a ghost to work.



91. Ajarn Suea working his magic.

pictures face each other. With the Wicha of Ajarn Suea, the candle used in the graveyard is small because it delivers the ingredients inside in a quicker fashion, which in Ajarns experience makes a more effective ritual. For a love ritual, the candles have to be stood in a line, and the wax dripped to make them stand has to come from the burning candle itself. If the ritual were for separation, a lighter would be used to melt the bottom of the candle to affix it to the floor. The candles are in two lines, and the distance apart is in relation to where the object people for this ritual are situated, being further apart if they are a long way away and bundled together if actually present for the ceremony.

The offering trays are made from a folded banana leaf and consist of rice, banana, some fish, flowers, Miang (a Northern Thai pickle made from young tea leaves), tobacco and pig's blood, poured on the offerings after being placed in the cremation pit. The spirits love alcohol and there were two offering trays given with two small bottles of local liquor next to them at the end of each line of candles, all of which have the requisite spells inside. The offerings are payment for the ghost, the bribe to get him to work and there is also a promise made to bring another offering of this type later. Ajarn also explained that each Master has a different style of offering and a different way to perform this ceremony but their way works for them and his method works for him.

Ajarn then calls the ghost with his hand out and slaps the side of the cremation pit while reciting kata and then calls the spirits again so Ajarn can choose the one he wanted to perform the task. He cast a spell in his hand and slapped the side once more. Then, there were footsteps on the leaves from behind, and Ajarn called that ghost to come. Ajarn explained that he chooses the spirit that wants to both help and is eager to take the offering. Ghosts are always hungry, but Ajarn likes to select a Phi Tai Hong ghost for these tasks although he prefers to choose a good person who died tragically, one who is wanting the merit to move towards their rebirth.

When home, Ajarn blessed some water with Sompoi, and everyone washed their hands, splashed the water on our shoes and then used the wet hands to wipe the face, the back of the neck and the clothes to remove any spirits that may tag along.

With ghosts that do any work for him, Ajarn is polite with them, and only requests work to be done, never forcing them. He believes that when getting older, if an Ajarn has tried to force the ghosts to work for him they may attack as the Ajarn weakens with age. If it is a request to the ghosts, after feeding them and giving them merit with kindness, these attacks are less likely to happen.

A Candle Ritual to Separate Couples

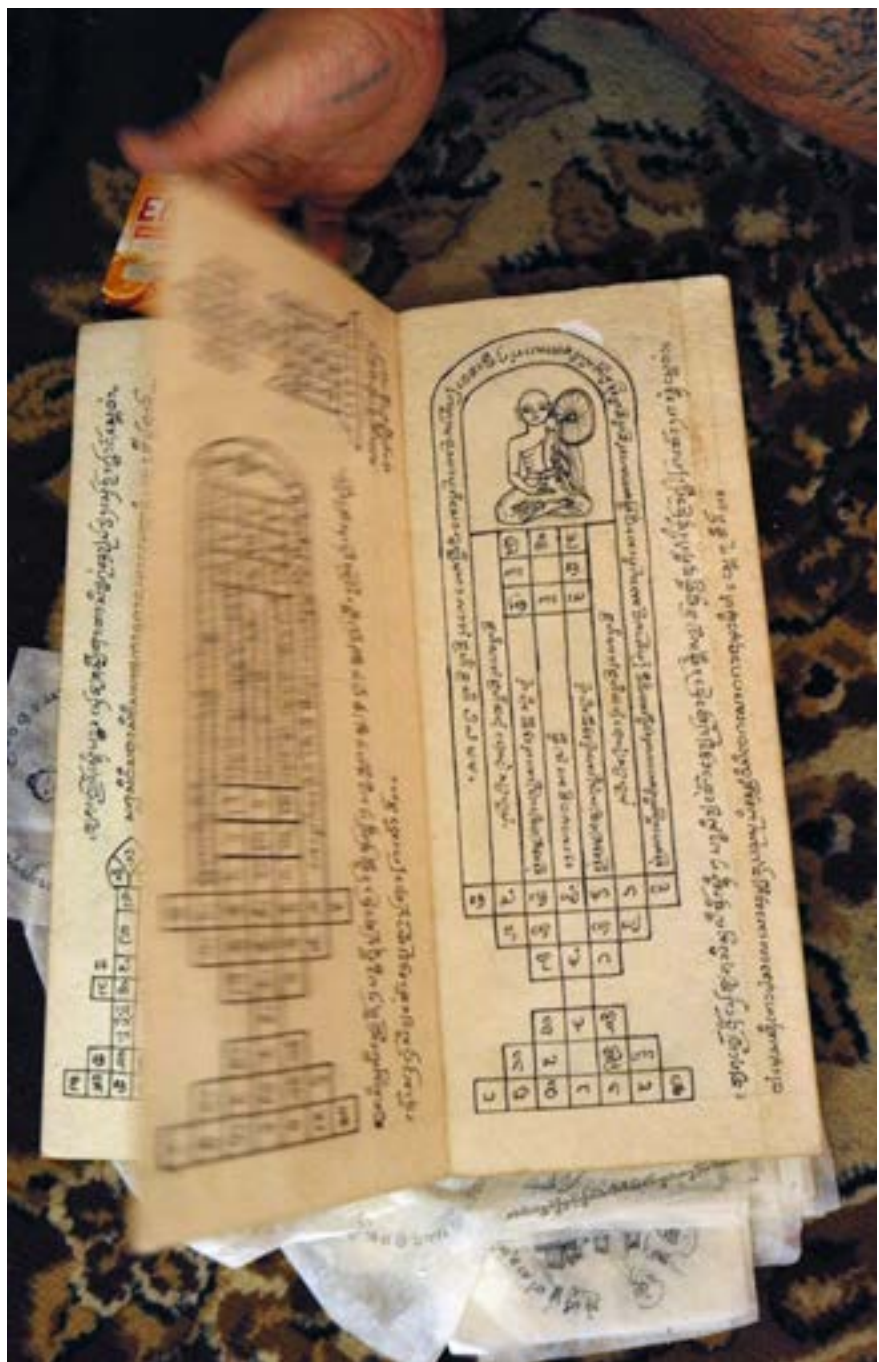
A graveyard ritual with Ajarn Suea

Magic always has two sides and the knowledge for this ritual for separation came to Ajarn while learning how to bring people together through a ritual for Saneah.

When a married person finds out that their partner is unfaithful, the spouse will come to see Ajarn Suea with the request to break up their wayward partners' new relationship. The first thing to do in this case is to check the wayward partners' astrology to see if they are of a strong mind, and whether they are suitable for the ritual. If that person's mind is presently not susceptible, then a ritual must be done first to weaken their mind, thus giving the break-up ritual more chance of working. The right preparation for all magic of this type is essential as we need to ensure the best possible chance of success. There are two types of Saneah ritual, one to bring them together and the reverse of that spell, which will break them apart and here, the spell is reversed.

If a husband has started to have an affair, Ajarn first has to perform a ritual to break that relationship and then another to bring the husband and the wife back together again. These rituals are both done in a graveyard, and the first thing to do is make an offering of food. For most practitioners, this usually comprises of a spoonful of rice and banana, but the Wicha of Ajarn Suea calls for a spoonful of rice, a banana, a piece of raw meat and fish, a glass of alcohol, food wrapped in a leaf and a cigarette. It is necessary to bribe the spirits properly to get them to carry the power of the candle ritual to the target. Ghosts are like humans; there are good ones and bad ones. A good spirit will be more willing to work as they want to collect the merit from helping someone and be reborn again. A bad spirit is one that will accept the bribe and not do the work, possibly even harming the people involved in the action of the magic, so great care is taken at all times.

Before any ritual in a graveyard, permission must first be granted from the guardian spirits of the cremation ground. It is vitally important that both the humans and the spirits keep their promises. The spirits work must be done as they have been bribed and it is promised during the ritual that if it is successful, another offering to them will be given. This action helps ensure 'clean work' with no negative effects to anyone involved.



92. Ajarn Suea flicks through one of his library of Wicha books, left to him by his Master, Kruba Duangdee.



93. A Kom ritual with Ajarn Tui, performed in a dirty place to pull down a person's prestige.



94. *This Kom ritual involves two figures being made, with the oppressed person put over the other. This is then placed under a bridge for people to walk over.*



95. A cursing ritual by Ajarn Ting.

Curses - an interview with Ajarn Ting

There are many forms of curse known to Thai magicians, but they are a malicious style of magic that does not sit well within the modern system. Most of these curses come from old forms of tribal magic and the Mhor Phi, having no Buddhist influences. Initially, it was not intended to put any of the curses in the book, but as this aspect of The Thai Occult holds great interest in the outside world, Ajarn Ting granted an interview. Ajarn knows many forms of dark tribal magic but refuses to teach these arts, and some of the details are too terrible to put into print. There is a whole branch of curses involving dogs, and the ones that use fish are awful, meaning that these two are the only ones written about here.

On this tray is a figure in the form of a wax doll that was made from the candles that were used during a cremation to mark the four directions. The doll has the name of the enemy being cursed inside, and it is then given the 32 parts of the body spell to bring it to life. The name and birthday of the object person are also placed inside the doll with the blessing, effectively recreating the object person as a wax figure.

When making the ritual in the graveyard, offerings are given to the ghosts, which include raw meats, blood, alcohol and cigarettes. Ajarn will then pierce the wax doll with needles, usually 7 in number or using the bamboo stick that has been used to pierce a corpse's stomach to aid the burning of a corpse during a cremation. The needles can be placed anywhere on the doll that Ajarn wishes to create the pain; the mouth, stomach, legs or arms, anywhere. Some of the methods used to make this curse require Ajarn to bury the doll in the graveyard, a strongly haunted place or a termite mound, and it is buried head down to continually force the luck and health of the enemy to be terrible.

These dolls cause illness, bad luck and obstacles to come to the life of the person who has been cursed, or in the worst case, to bring death. In this case, the curse is for an enemy who attacked first, and the doll remains in the Samnak until the magic has worked. The flowers under the figure are ones that have been used to praise the higher spirits, but at first, a spiky red flower is used to force the curse forward. If it is the wrong time of year for the red flower, a red cloth can also be used to begin the process of the evil taking effect.

Ajarn Ting rarely performs this magic for others, but he knows many forms of ancient curses, some of the details of which are jaw dropping. Another curse he explained was for adversely affecting people who travel a lot for business, binding the registration of their car into the curse and using the wheel of the trolley that is used to carry a corpse to the cremation grounds. This curse was to cause them to have an accident and Ajarn states that this style of curse is particularly effective (with a wry smile).

Ajarn Khaw

Ajarn Khaw is a remarkable man who has followed the magical path for most of his life. He is an Ajarn who genuinely helps people and has the heart of a monk, which shows itself in his manner and the way he expresses himself. Humble and self-effacing but exuding an air of extensive knowledge, Ajarn Khaw quickly draws both respect and trust from devotees. An example of Ajarn Khaw's way was when there was a small disaster with losing the recording of an interview, and without a flicker, Ajarn just said to turn it back on as he could remember everything said.

Ajarn Khaw was ordained as a Naen at the age of 12 in a temple that is very close to his family home. On the first night in the temple though, there were sounds, scary sounds, like they came from a ghost and all the Naen's thought it was a *Phi Lok* (a wondering ghost). Everyone was terrified, to the point where they could not move or walk outside, everyone trembling on their beds or hiding. Near the temple was Phor Nahn Duang, who was very old, but still a mighty magician at the age of 94. He could not walk by that time, but his mind was very sharp, so Ajarn went to ask him to teach some of his magic to beat the ghosts. Ajarn Khaw also studied many other Wicha, such as making holy water and charm magic over a three month period before Phor Nahn passed away. Much of the influence of magic was also familial, and Ajarn inherited the Wicha books from the brother of his grandfather, who was a renowned monk from this region. These Wicha books contained complex magic, and Ajarn Khaw is still absorbing the knowledge from these ancient grimoires.

A move to Lopburi to learn the books available to a Naen also involved being taught by an old monk, Luang Ta Li, who repaid this keen young Naen's interest in magic with much knowledge. There then came a move to Bangkok to formally study the Pali language but Ajarn found it difficult, studiously avoiding it to learn magic from another old Luang Phor instead. Because of that Ajarn failed the Pali exams and had to leave the temple. Ajarn thinks that he would have passed if the test had been on magic!

A year after returning home, Ajarn ordained again and went to Wat Chai Mongkhon, a very famous temple near to Pattaya to try the Pali exams again and met Luang Phor Sawai, a famous old monk. He didn't know how to talk to him though because he was a scary, fat old monk with a fearsome face, so Ajarn went to his Kuti every day to clean and brought him small gifts. After a time Luang Phor Sawai accepted him and taught from his magic books for one year, but again, Ajarn failed the Pali exams and had to leave. The next time, Ajarn ordained near to Chiang Mai in Wat Doi Khoo but this time as a monk to take care of the temple and it was here that Ajarn started to perform magic. Having learned magic for many years it was now the time to test it, and the first items were Takrut, Pha Yant and amulets and people liked them, which was encouraging.



96. A few grimoires of knowledge from the library of Ajarn Khaw.



97. Ajarn blessing some Phra Ngang for Santiago Barela.

In the next year, during a seven day trip to Chiang Rai for meditation with many monks, it was possible to meet Kruba Wong, who was from the Shan State and very old too. Instead of the meditation, Ajarn studied with Kruba Wong and what he taught was both important and powerful, which included the two tiger magic and some forms of Burmese Wicha. The two tiger magic was the most powerful form that Kruba Wong possessed, one tiger for luck and good fortune and the other for protection, always together. The twin Tigers is also a Sak Yant, but it is a very expensive Yant because it is important magic and Ajarn thinks that important magic should be expensive. In this way, people value it correctly. Ajarn Khaw holds a few forms of magic that he considers exceptional and will not apply unless people appreciate it properly.

Kruba Wong also taught Ajarn many forms of black magic to hurt people, including many types of candle magic. The thought of a monk knowing black magic is often confusing to foreigners, how can a renowned Kruba learn and teach black magic? Well, Kruba never used it but had to know how to perform the magic because when people have black magic cast upon them, he could assist them due to an understanding as to the cause of the problem. Kruba Wong was an influence on Ajarn Khaw who helped him understand that if an Ajarn or monk learns too much Wicha, it can be a problem. Many forms of magic have rules that must be abided by, and these rules must be followed. They must be remembered, and this limits the amount of magic that can be absorbed by any Ajarn.

From this point, Ajarn Khaw focussed on his work as an abbot in the temple although there was always time to perform magic for people, but shortly after this period, he disrobed and became an Ajarn. There are so many rules when a monk, cannot do this, cannot do that and it restricts the practice of magic. If Ajarn still performed magic as a monk, it could bring bad karma, and he did not have the feeling to be a monk any more.

Becoming a layperson gave Ajarn the chance to go and study with Ajarn Phor Daeng in Bangkok, who had learned magic from a deva and was very famous at that time. His magic is complicated but highly effective, and the essential Wicha of this Kruba Ajarn was Na Kasan Thoranee, which is for charming and attracting sex. Many famous Masters learned from him but Ajarn Phor Daeng checked every disciple before accepting them, he was a strict teacher. At one time Ajarn Khaw had a break from practising and went to travel, forgetting to practice kata or do meditation at the correct times that had been set by Phor Daeng who later called, shouted a lot and refused to teach him any more because he knew that his rules were not being followed. The deva associated with Phor Daeng had told him that Ajarn was not doing the work as prescribed.

Ajarn's new Master is Phor Sang Wa Na, who is from the Shan State in Burma, is now 91 years old and lives near to Chiang Mai. Phor Sang's

speciality is with Sak Yant, rare forms of candle magic and uses the practice where the Luksit tries to master a Yant on paper before burning and eating, which in this case is from the Tai Yai tradition. In this way, a person can absorb the power of the Yant. The Lanna, Burmese and Tai Yai forms of magic are similar, like brothers, all with something to offer.

Ajarn Khaw has many disciples around the world, and if a person wants to become a Luksit, Ajarn considers it best to be a monk first as that is that best way to acquire the Samathi necessary to be an Ajarn. Studying as a monk creates a balance between the light and the dark aspects of magic, and many people who have not been monks are pulled too much into darkness. Being a monk also helps because of the study of the Pali language and some of the words used in the Wicha are very difficult and need to be said correctly. Performing 'Wai Phra' (paying respects to the Buddha) every day helps with practising kata and the pronunciation, essential elements in creating magic.

There are many ways to do meditation to start the process of gaining Samathi. An easy way is to sit in any way that is comfortable, because it makes it easier not to think. Just relax and follow the breath, focus only on the breathing and show no interest in anything else. Do this when alone, and it is OK to have the eyes open or closed, whichever is easiest but closed is better for most as there are fewer distractions from the practice. If the legs start to ache, know it is leg ache and don't let the mind wander. When it does, go back to the breath, which is comfortable and relaxed. All thoughts need to cease in meditation, and if this is possible for even a couple of minutes, that is a good start, it is ok already, no need to do too long at the beginning. There are many, many levels to attain but each one needs a teacher, it cannot be rushed or it won't work. If a person begins to like meditation the teaching must be step by step, and it is essential to have a teacher because if attempted without one, it will make you crazy.

The saying of kata is just another way to get Samathi, and a person should choose the best kata to say, there's no need to say every kata. The important thing is to find an excellent kata and then practice it a lot, with closed eyes if it helps to focus. If there is a distraction with the resulting loss of focus, start again, which can mean that saying a kata 108 times may take all day (*laughter*). On waking up, say kata and also before sleep is good because rest comes quickly when a person has a clear mind. Three or four kata is enough, no need to do too much as all kata are effectively the same.

A Graveyard Ritual for bringing partners back together by Ajarn Khaw.

This is a ritual to bring a couple back together and to love each other once more. Ajarn will not perform this ritual for everybody, only to bring married couples back together once they have separated. A ceremony like this is not just for girlfriends and boyfriends; this is magic that is constructed under the right circumstances, when a person needs their loved one to come back.



98. Ajarn Khaw's ritual to bring couples back together.

Ajarn Khaw thinks that this is a complicated ritual, not only because of the magic involved but because of the materials needed. Ajarn needs the hair, nails and clothing from both partners as well as the most unusual thing, which is the dirt from under their feet and this has to come from the right foot of the man and the left foot of the woman. Needing items from the right and left side is because the magic aims to make the two of them become one again, and actions such as this are in many forms of Wicha. The Horasart of this ritual is also important, so it is necessary to have their birth details to work out the best day to make the ceremony, which brings the best results.

Once the collected items are mixed into candle wax, two dolls are made, that are then bound together using the Sai Sin blessed thread from a dead body. The figures are placed inside a rolled photograph of the couple together and united in happier times. Seeing an image of them together when making the magic is important and helps make the magic strong. The ritual is made in the cemetery, but the dolls are not left there, they are brought back to the Samnak and blessed every day for one week. If the couple wants, the wax dolls can be returned to them, which some people ask for but if not, after one week they are taken back to the cemetery and buried.

Some people can get all the materials that are needed but some people cannot. The magic can still be made but the percentage chance of it working becomes less, which is explained to the person wanting the ritual before proceeding. It is a difficult time when people separate, and the devotee who wants their love back needs everything explained clearly.

Ajarn uses the Sai Sin from a dead body because it adds power but the main work here is performed by the ghost that is asked to do the task. After three months, if the ritual has not worked, the items can be blessed again. This ritual is more powerful because it is not just from a man, this also has a ghost, and the ceremony uses materials from the people involved, which boosts the magic. Ordinary candle magic is around 50% to 60% successful, but from this type of ritual, it is 75% to 80% successful; there cannot be a success for everybody. One disciple asked for this ceremony to bring back his wife and she came back in three days, but the man hit her and fought with her again because he got angry that she had left. Now they are separated for good, which is sad, but he could not let go of his anger at her and she understandably went away to start a new life. A person needs to change their life and attitude after making this ceremony. It will provide a chance to be back together but the person who brought the ritual must be prepared to change, or it will not work out well.

Take a rest. Look at some photographs.



99. This is a short photo essay on another ritual to bring a couple back together. Here, Ajarn Ting used 9 hand made magic candles to his deities.



100. The previous photo showed the candles to Suea Yen and here, there are three candles to Mae Surasatee. Ajarn Ting is asking the deities for help.



101. And a further candle to Ajarn's other Suea Yen bucha.



102. Part of the shrine to Ajarn's Masters and Lersi with a pig's head offering.



103. *Magic to bind.*



104. The Serm Duang ritual bath with Ajarn Suea.

The Serm Duang Bath - An interview with Ajarn Suea

The Serm Duang bath is ritual bathing with holy water to change the luck of the disciple, for someone who had good things in their life but suddenly, everything has gone wrong. To prepare the holy water, Ajarn needs the water from 7 wells, the rainwater from the month of May and then mix these with drinking water and Sompoi, a seed pod that is renowned for removing harmful elements within the body. Jasmine flowers are also added in praise of the Buddha and for their sweet smell. The water is then strongly blessed with specific kata that acts to cleanse whatever or whoever it touches.

The bath itself is given when the sun goes down because the setting sun will carry away the harmful elements that have affected the person involved, instead of those elements affecting anyone else present. During the pouring of the water on the head, there is specific cleansing kata spoken, and all the contents of the bucket must fall on the persons' head, even the last drips, the flower buds and the pieces of Sompoi.

There are quite a few forms of the Serm Duang bath, including one that removes any black magic cast on the person. In that case, the ritual water is also drunk, which the person will then vomit, ejecting the curse.

The Kasin Fai Ritual - a fire ritual with Ajarn Apichai

A friend was visiting Chiang Mai and wanted to remove the effects of the past and begin life afresh. The first thought for this was to have a Serm Duang bath with Ajarn Suea (Ajarn's baths are famous in Chiang Mai) but the Horasart was not correct; the friend was here on an inauspicious day so Ajarn Suea would not give that particular ritual. Ajarn puts the effectiveness of the procedure and the client before any monetary gain. The other good option was the Kasin Fai ritual as it also burns away the past. Firstly, Ajarn chanted kata while he melted a hand full of candles into a glass. Ajarn Apichai then took a mouth full of this wax and sprayed it over the devotee, letting it pass through the lit candles in his hand. The intensity of the heat produced and the size of the ball of fire was quite shocking and of the four people watching, two fell over. Everyone was trying to photograph this ritual, but this photograph is the only one that caught the intensity of the fireball, which was somewhat lucky as the photo was taken while falling back to avoid being burned. Chris, on the other hand, emerged looking years younger.

The Kasin Fai ritual uses the wax from melted candles and the Wicha of Maudgalyayana, who was a close disciple of The Buddha. Maudgalyayana could use his psychic power to travel through the realms of hell and ease the suffering of the spirits found there. This Wicha is used along with other katas to rid the devotee of unhappiness and ill fortune, which allows the



105. *Chris under the sheet.*



106. Waiting for the Kasin Fai ritual while attached to Ajarn Apichai with the Sai Sin.



107. Ajarn chants the kata.



108. *This is an intense ritual.*

good luck to return. Good fortune is coming to us all the time, but when people become negative or depressed, it finds it difficult to enter. This ritual cleanses through a blast of fire from a cloud of melted candle wax, which envelopes the person to symbolise the burning away of any clouds of despair while Ajarn chants kata to add a spell to the process.

According to Wikipedia, Maudgalyayana had the most celebrated psychic powers of all the disciples of the enlightened one. In varying accounts from the Pali Canon (akin to the Buddhist Bible), Maudgalyayana was said to be able to speak with the horrific ghosts in hell (specifically Preta's) to explain to them their appalling conditions. In this way, by helping them understand their suffering, the hope rises that they could release themselves from it.

And this is from Chris, the man under the sheet.

While under the sheet it only felt warm but nothin anywhere close to being burned, it was quite comforting. Afterwards, the awful feeling that had been in the chest area had lifted. It felt like a spider and had been there a long time. Without it, Chris feels that his life has transformed. He is happier, feels more serene, and is saying this months after this ritual itself.

The Kasin Fai Ritual - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

Many Ajarns perform the Kasin Fai ritual and in many different ways, but Ajarn Rung uses it to get rid of bad things from inside the devotee, like lousy fortune or bad energy. It takes type of strong Samathi to be able to perform the Kasin Fai ritual, built through the specific practice of candle flame meditation. The fire ritual is usually made after other ceremonies for raising the good fortunes of the person to make sure everything negative is burned out; it is like a closing ritual for work performed on a devotee.

In this ritual, a flame is sprayed over the person three times and each time has a different purpose. During the first blast, Ajarn uses the Thao Waesuwan kata to protect the person from evil spirits. With the second blast, Ajarn turns the bad fate to a better direction, and now that the adverse luck has gone, with the last explosion of flame Ajarn uses the Mongkut Phrajow kata (The God's Crown kata) to cover the person with goodness and block any of the bad things from returning.

This Kasin Fai ritual was requested by a person who had already changed the direction in his life but wanted to clean the past and man, the blast of fire with this was powerful, with only moderate singeing of the hair. It was a mighty blessing. Ajarn Rung then felt that it would be appropriate to tag another ritual on the end of the fire ritual and with no comment, began to drip the wax from a handful of burning candles into a bowl of blessed water. This ritual was to check the fate of the client, to see if the Kasin Fai worked.



109. Ajarn Perm Rung is connected to the devotee with the Sai Sin thread.



110. *Burn away the past to begin afresh, it is one hell of a ritual.*



111. After the Kasin Fai ritual, Ajarn started to drip candle wax into blessed water.



112. To start the pulling the candle wax ritual to check the client's fate.



113. And then wrapped the wax onto his head while reciting kata and blessing.



114. Ajarn Apichai inserting gold needles.

Inserting Gold Needles with Ajarn Apichai

Ajarn Apichai was the best Ajarn to interview about inserting gold needles into the body because Ajarn has 108 of these inside him. He has done this as part of a magical journey as well as part of his personal love magic, the results of which have become quite legendary. Sets of three needles have been inserted into various parts of the forehead to influence how people see him as well as many in each arm, but the body is balanced, with equal amounts on each side. When discussing this, Ajarn described the effects as many fold, but his body feels electrified when either touched or when he touches someone. Ajarn demonstrated this by touching the author's arm lightly with an index finger, and a current ran straight to his groin, which was funny at the time. On another occasion when discussing whether they could cause harm with rough actions, he said no and allowed those present to touch his upper arm, where some needles are under the skin. The feeling coming from this area was powerful.

The use of gold needle insertions in the Lanna region is ancient, and although there is little-recorded history to rely on, the techniques used in creating them (primarily the kata) indicate that the practice dates back to the olden days. In this region, gold is considered to be the purest element in nature, and while the body can absorb some gold, the needles remain in the body intact, continuing to work throughout the persons' lifetime. These can be felt and seen under the skin of Ajarn Apichai, but the body does not feel any pain if they are touched or even if someone uses strength where they are inserted.

The gold needles are made by drawing a Yant on thin sheets of gold and then the gold is melted and made into a needle, which is very small. The Yant placed onto the gold and the kata used depends on both where the needle is placed, and its purpose but specific regions of the body are used depending on the attributes that the needle holds. Of course, Ajarn uses modern health guidelines for any work where blood may come from the devotee's body, but the system itself predates all of the contemporary concerns for sterility and caution with such matters.

If the needles are inserted into the arm, it offers protection from all harm, which makes them popular with the Police and those in the armed forces. When the person with these insertions is in danger, the needles move and alert that person. If attacked, the needles will move to protect against any weapons being used by either not allowing them to penetrate the body or in the case of a gun, making it misfire or miss their target. Placing gold needles in the back brings protection from the angels. Putting them in various parts of the forehead offers either strong authority (and here the person should already be in a position of authority rather than assume that they should be in) or what Ajarn terms 'superstar Saneah', so the devotee should be ready mentally to become very popular. Time is needed for the person to adjust

to the increased attributes bestowed, which can be a little disorienting at first.

The kata for the gold needles is specifically designed to bring them to life and enable them to run through the body to perform the desired tasks.

Gold Needles - Fang Khem Thong - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

The needles for this ritual have to be of real gold, not gold leaf over a pin, which has caused problems in the past with infections, only real gold. When making these needles, the gold has to be rolled and stretched out to be about as thick as a thread of cotton and then cut into sections.

The insertion of gold needles into the body is to increase Saneah, bring Serm Duang, Chok Laap or Metta to the person and each region of the body into which they are inserted has a different effect. Ajarn Rung considers that when a person increases the gold element in their body, it has the effect of increasing their intrinsic value to the point of almost 'being gold' which attracts people to them. The needles can be inserted into five different parts of the body, the forehead, the two arms and the two legs. Men usually request the needle for the forehead (around the third eye or between the brows) for extreme Saneah, but in Thailand today there are many people with plastic surgery, so Ajarn now places them above the hairline. Being above the hairline hides the needle well, and it still does its job. This needle insertion is similar to the ritual Na Naa Thong, but here, the gold needles will stay in the body forever, continually doing their job.

The use of gold needles evolved from an ancient practice of inserting actual gold or silver Takruts into the body, but this has changed with time. Now, the needle itself does not have any Yant or script on it, but the Ajarn will place the attribute required by the devotee into the gold through a blessing. The gold will not dissolve in the body, but it can move to a different place, without causing harm to the body. People are very rarely allergic to gold, and the recording of infections from these is tiny but some people have used a silver needle with gold over it, and quite a few people are allergic to silver, so it had to be taken out. It HAS to be pure gold and not mixed with other metals, which can rust within the body. This aspect of the ritual is essential.

The history of inserting items within the body dates back to prehistory in this region. There is also Wicha for inserting ivory, Jade (for cooling the spirit), gems (generally for the protection of warriors), Leklai and even mercury into the body but Ajarn Rung stays away from inserting these items. He only uses gold because it causes the least trouble if done correctly; it is bright, beautiful, valuable and has purity. Inserting Leklai for protection is thousands of years old, but it is a more difficult procedure, and it can rust like metal, so Ajarn Rung avoids it. To insert Leklai, the flesh under the arm is pulled down and cut a little to open a hole, into which the Ajarn pushes the Leklai.



115. Gold needles on the palm of Ajarn Perm Rung.



116. The inserting of Leklai with Ajarn Piyasitti.

The same process can also be followed on the chest to bring the protective element to the front of the body, but it is a painful process. This region has a history of putting many items into the body but it is often for the same effect of the gold needles, and the kata is often similar, so Ajarn Rung opts for the safest option. Some people insert just one needle for one attribute whereas others feel that they need more for the same job and it depends on the level of satisfaction that the person requires. They all do their job, and this is a very popular ritual that can have outstanding results.

Inserting Leklai into the Body - an interview with Ajarn Piyasitti

Leklai has proved to be a difficult subject to cover in this book. It is such a mysterious element that it is possible that much of what is known as Leklai could be fake and the book is missing an interview with someone who collects Leklai or can explain it satisfactorily from a Western perspective. The substance used in this insertion by Ajarn Piyasitti is mysterious in itself but this example can be trusted, and the interview is excellent.

The Wicha held by Ajarn Piyasitti dictates that the Leklai is inserted in the soft flesh under the arm and near the armpit. A new blade cuts a small nick under sterile conditions, and the Leklai is pushed in. It looks like a small capsule of stone, but this is not stone, it is Leklai from a cave in the forest, and a Master of Leklai collects it. It has a greenish hue that reminds one of jungle, and it is very odd indeed. It is not from the amulet market, where pretty much everything is fake.

Leklai is put into the body because it has power within it. It is there to balance the four elements within the person (Na Ma Pa Ta - earth, air, fire and water) and adjusting the magic that dwells within. A good balance of the four elements can help with the ability to converse with the spirits from various realms, and especially with the spirits that reside in amulets. It brings a stronger connection to all the things related to the magical systems of the region and protects the persons' spirit while dealing with the various entities as well as the Masters of old. Many believe that Leklai is for Kong Grapan, but that is not the case, having Leklai under the skin is like adding a battery to your inner power, and having a better reception to all things related to magic. It lifts the person up!

A Master sourced this Leklai, and only he can do this. If the Master sent his Luksit, the forest could kill him. There are many types of Leklai but unfortunately, most Leklai is fake, so it has to come from a true Master. Ajarn Piya does not believe the stories about cave Leklai dripping from the roof of caves during a ritual, and thinks that it is a myth or legend. Leklai is considered to have been made by the forest itself, and it is also not magnetic, as many people think. Leklai has to be given by a god or deity, and each has a different name. There are hundreds of Leklai, and yes, it is very confusing, but it is a deeply held knowledge that is not shared by the Masters.

Ajarn Verataep of Bangkok

As with many Thai people, Ajarn Verataep had the opportunity to witness Ajarns performing Saiyasart magic from a young age. Seeing its effects brought a keen interest in magical practices, which grew to become a significant part of Ajarns life, and it remains this way to this day. As with many practitioners, the learning first started by attending local rituals and there was once a curing ritual that was held by the village witch doctor (Mhor Phi) that had a profound effect on Ajarn as a young boy. At the age of 10, he actively started to look into studying the magical arts, and has never stopped since that time.

As in many villages, the temple was the centre of knowledge, a place where people went to study both Buddhism, and to gain a general education from the resident monks. Ajarn entered this world as a temple boy, learning first about chanting and meditation, and following that, there naturally arose the subject of magic. In the rural areas of Thailand, the world of magic is seen every day, and the people rely on it to get through the trials of life.

The monks and people in the village were very helpful with regard to his pursuit of knowledge, but as soon as age permitted, Ajarn started to travel to other towns to study magic in places such as Phitsanulok, Nakhon Sawan, Uthai Thani and Buriram. He studied with different monks, some of whom were from Cambodia and their Wicha knowledge was extensive. Some of them passed on old Wicha books which aided the study of the Khom script (the script prevalent in the central regions, Esaan and Cambodia itself) as well as the use of kata for spells, but the most important aspect of studying magic is the practice of building the psyche. Everyone, with some effort, can chant and learn about the katas for spells, but to make it effective it must come from an iron psyche.

If Ajarn makes a Golden Boy and wants it to be powerful, it has to have the correct Wicha and be constructed using both a dominant psyche and good Samathi. Meditation is the best method to raise the abilities of one's psychic power and contemplation, and continual practice is essential. The deeper the practice of meditation, the better the psyche and hence, the better the results when using that power.

Before becoming an Ajarn, there was a period of practice concerning the methods used to make amulets, which were then usually given away to build interest. As Ajarn improved, people started to ask for various talismans and wanted to pay for the service, which gave him the confidence to continue. Ajarns' first amulets are from around 20 years ago, and the process of trying to perfect the art never stops as he considers that it is always possible to do better. Ajarn Verataep opened the Samnak in 2002, and it is where Ajarn lives and works to this day.



117. Ajarn Verataep blessing the gold before applying to the body of a devotee.



118. Ajarn Tay during his Na Naa Thong blessing.

Na Naa Thong - The Gold Face Blessing - an interview with Ajarn Verataep

The Na Naa Thong ritual has been popular since ancient times, and it is considered to have originated at the same time as the creation of Thai Saiyasart magic itself. The face is the first thing seen by others, and the Na Naa Thong focusses on this moment, a moment which can change the life forever. The ritual attracts others to the person who has had the ceremony, it gives them charm, which is incredibly important in life.

Gold is used on the face because it is both valuable and it shines like the rising of the sun. Blessing gold onto the face brings that shine, metaphorically making your face more valuable, akin to being made of gold itself. The idea is that whoever sees your face looks at it like looking at gold, with awe and wonder. Ajarn Verataep is famous for this ritual.

Each region of Thailand has a very similar ritual for Na Naa Thong, but each region uses different kata. There are many Na kata, and their usage will depend on that Ajarns expertise with each Yant Na, which means that there are many ways to make the ritual - Na Naa Thong Metta, Na Naa Thong Saneah, Na Naa Thong Ruchaa (to make oneself well known), so many styles, and it all depends on what the devotee feels that they need in their life.

Na Naa Thong - an Interview with Ajarn Tay

The gold face blessings are known as Na Naa Thong in the Thai language, and the ritual is generally considered to be for both Metta and Maha Niyom, but that is not always the case. Ajarn Tay is regarded as the best with this blessing in the Lanna region, and has gained his knowledge from the old Wicha books of Kruba Sri Wichai (A legendary Lanna monk. The term Kruba, is a Northern Thai suffix to denote that he was a 'teacher monk' and the lineages that studied his knowledge are vast) where he lays out 108 practices for Na Naa Thong blessings (108 is a number often used to denote a vast amount, there are not only 108 various gold face blessings). Depending on the position of the gold on the face and the spell used, the Gold Face Blessings can also bestow the attributes of Kong Grapan, Maha Saneah, Chok Laap, help with business, trade and fortune etc.

According to the Northern Thai knowledge, sesame oil is applied first to help the gold adhere to the face, and there are so many of these blessings that Ajarn Tay freely admits that he cannot remember them all. Everything is in the relevant Wicha books from the region, but most Masters who perform this ceremony are unaware that they are not only for bestowing Metta on the devotee. Besides using a different spell for each attribute that is to be given, it also depends on the maker's intention, and his ability to invite his Master to come to help to bless that person.

The Na Naa Thong is by far the most popular blessing for devotees of both Ajarn Tay, and of Thai magic itself. Not only does it give personal time with Ajarn, allowing him to influence the life of the devotee directly, it is also quite beautiful due to the application of gold on the face. Gold is considered to hold the blessing well, and it also enters the skin and body of the person involved, accepting the intention and magical skills of Ajarn Tay.

With Leon, the client in the photograph, the request was for Metta, but what was striking was the various forms and rhythms of the kata used, some of them guttural from deep within Ajarn's body and some of a more recognisable form. Leon said that when Ajarn was drawing the Na onto the gold on his forehead it felt like he was pushing a pin through his brain, and he emerged from the whole process entirely blown away.

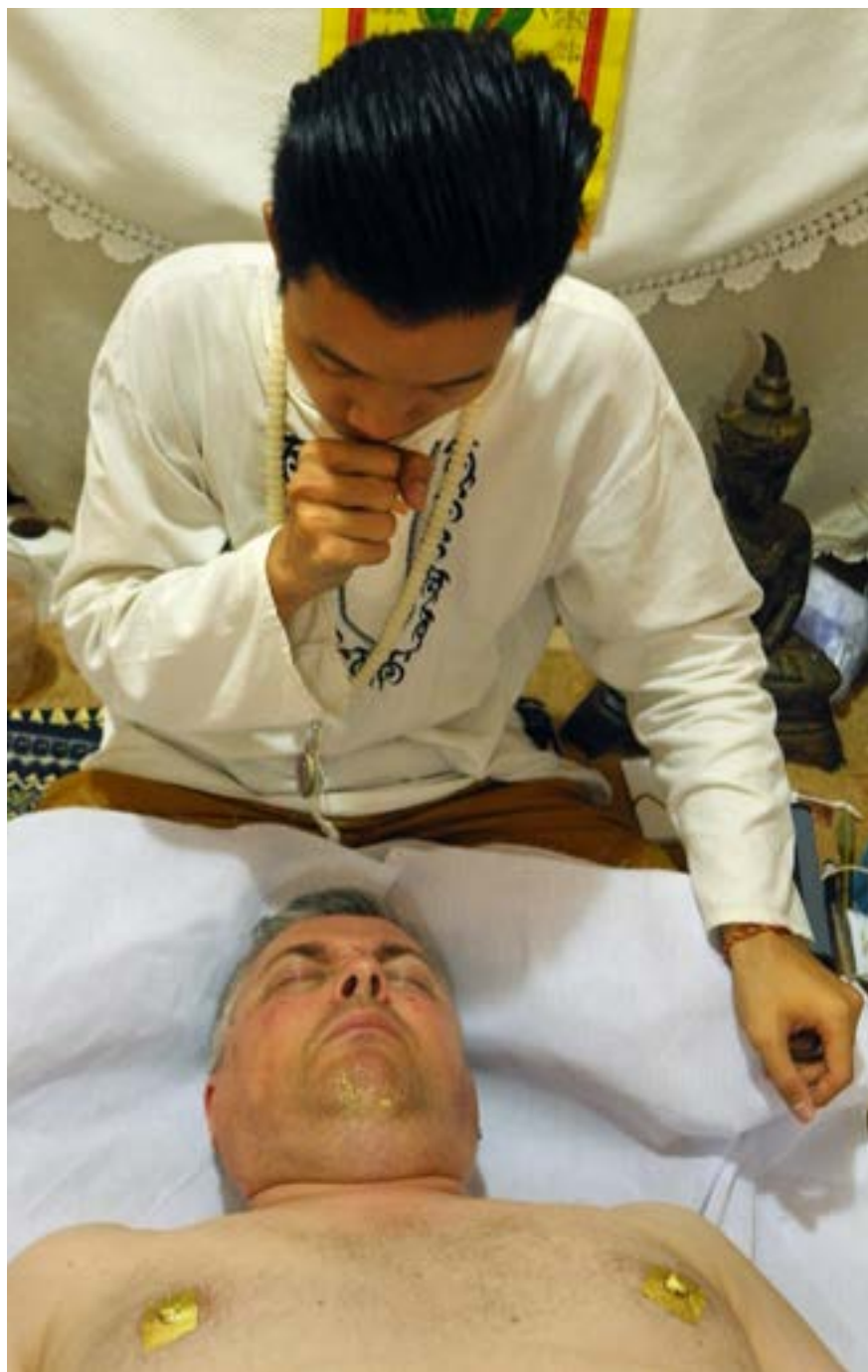
Na Naa Thong - an Interview with Ajarn Apichai

The gold face blessings are a divine knowledge that improves a persons virtue and merit. Moreover, it helps with Metta Maha Niyom, Maha Saneah, luck and prosperity. If the person who receives the Na Naa Thong blessing doesn't have a lover, it will bring lovers to them. Whoever has difficulty in business, it will help make it a success. All good things will come, and all the presently bad influences will turn to good. It's called Na Naa Thong because the ritual is using pure gold on the face, and the Na scriptures that are constructed specially for the ceremony. The essential Yant has to be passed on from the Master in question, which varies with every Master, meaning that each Ajarns techniques are unique from the others. Depending on the skill of the Ajarn with the specific Yant or Na scriptures, he will choose those that will have the best possible effect for the client.

Using gold is ancient knowledge, and the gold element has an enchanting property in itself. It has natural shine the gold is seen to be akin to the light from the sun. It also has auspicious qualities, representing goodness, beauty, and brightness. Gold has a resilience, resisting damage or change even if exposed to fire, wind or water, as these elemental forces cannot reduce the value and qualities of the gold. Thus Na Naa Thong was invented long ago as a ritual for all forms of prosperity, and magical attributes.

Na Naa Thong is usually performed on the forehead but the complete ritual uses many parts of the upper body, and each area of the person employed has significance.

1. The Forehead - The largest visible area on the face, and it is considered to be the place where grace is centred, making it the most important area used for this ritual.
2. The Eyelid or under eye – This area is used to enchant whoever looks into our eyes, influencing them to have empathy, and show love toward us.



119. Ajarn Apichai chanting the spell into his hand.



120. And then slaps the magic in.

3. The Cheeks – This helps our face to be loved and to receive benevolence from others by calling the power of the 4 faced Brahma.

4. The Jaw line – This is to be seen as reliable, to be trusted by others when we speak to them.

5. The Nape of the Neck – This is to be loved when people are looking from behind.

6. The Tongue – This is also called Salika Lin Thong, another form of Wicha using gold that is performed as a separate ritual.

7. The Top of the Head – This is an area believed to be an entrance point to the spirit and the soul of the devotee, the centre point of life, and the place where our guardian angel resides.

8. The Chin – The lowest part of our face, and the ritual is done here to give us power over others.

Additional places for the ritual are on the palms, which is believed to bring fortune, and luck to whatever is touched. There are also other areas of the body that can have gold applied during the ritual, and all have significance. If at all possible, a devotee who receives this blessing should try and return three times in one year to repeat the routine. A repeat blessing gives the opportunity to be able to place the gold on different areas of the body, effectively spreading the benefits bestowed throughout the person. Ajarn also states that if the disciple receives this ritual three times, the effect of Saneah, good fortune, prestige and protection should last a lifetime.

Before the gold leaf is applied, a Nam Man Waan Saneah oil is dabbed onto the area. This oil is a combination of 8 other Waan oils, which is kept in a tub along with 2 Takrut spells and an Inn Khoo made from Maa Taep Taroe wood, a wood that bestows Chok Laap and Maha Saneah. Ajarn Apichai made everything in the tub, the Takrut and the wood Inn Khoo and each process in the making of each item involves specific kata and strong intention.

Once the gold is on the skin, Ajarn chants a spell into his hand and slaps the magic into the devotee, which can be quite a shock as he hits with some force. Ajarn is cautious to explain what he will do before he starts and has to have permission for this action, but it is an essential aspect of this style, derived from the very famous monk, Luang Phor Wanlop. Luang Phor was renowned for striking people during various blessings, and he said that it is an important action that pushes the magic in. Ajarn Apichai's gold face blessing Wicha book was passed from Luang Phor Wanlop to his Grandfather, who personally taught him the Wicha. Ajarn then added certain aspects from the Wicha of Kruba Sri Wichai, which is the prevalent 'way' in the Lanna region.

A Sex Ritual - an interview with Ajarn Khaw

Some devotees ask Ajarn to perform an extreme sex ritual for them, which can be very useful for ladies of the night or people who want to enchant others through sex, and this is a ritual that can be done for men too. The ceremony for both men and women is the same, with Ajarn first putting charming oil all over the body. He then writes the correct kata in the oil on the front side, the back, but also with a particular emphasis on the erogenous zones. Gold leaf put on the mouth, the penis or vagina and the ass; all the erotic zones. A ritual such as this is intense magic.

Ajarn does not make this ritual very often as it is expensive, and he feels shy when making it but the magic works. The ceremony takes about 15 minutes and is very difficult for an Ajarn because he has to control himself fully, retaining his Samathi even when confronted with a beautiful naked person.

Old Lanna Fortune Telling with Ajarn A Klongkarn

A trip to see Ajarn A Klongkarn came about because a good friend had not seen this style of fortune telling performed since she was a child, and it is marked by the use of ghosts to tell of future events. Both the author and a visitor have taken part in these rituals, and some indication of their effects will be shared.

There are very few people who can now do the old Lanna style of fortune telling, and a Lanna Master from Chiang Rai taught Ajarn A the necessary skills. There are a few styles of this art, and they all involve using a ghost to help decipher future events.

The Fortune Telling Coconut (Mua Galong in Lanna or Duu Duang Nai Galaa in Thai)

For the first ritual, Ajarn A got out a metal frame for supporting the person, and then put a piece of wood on top of half of a one-eyed coconut for the person to balance on. Ajarn is told the question for the ghost, and then he has the person balance so that each end of the wood is raised off the ground while on the one eye of the coconut. Ajarn then chants some very old style kata, while watching the persons actions. The first person to try this ritual had studied Tai Chi, which is excellent for balance, but he said that his left leg kept being pulled down while Ajarn was chanting.

The one-eyed coconut is very rare to find and the chanted kata was a spell to invite Ajarn's Kuman Thong spirit to inhabit the space in the coconut shell, and influence the actions of the person who asked the question about their future. Ajarn only uses a Kuman Thong ghost for this ritual and has trained him for this purpose. This method dates back to ancient times and originates in Burma, with Ajarn A's teacher learning this from a tribal magician who



121. Ajarn A's Samnak is amazing, Wicha books everywhere! And a Khan Kru!



122. A very open Ajarn, happy to share his knowledge.



123. His Fortune Telling Coconut and board.



124. The 'Bat Mun'.

lived in the border regions between Thailand and Myanmar. The wood plank used can be of any type but the most important thing is the one-eyed coconut. As these are rare, if it breaks it can take months to find one to replace it. The length of time taken also depends on not only finding a one-eyed coconut but finding one that 'speaks' to Ajarn, and has the correct feeling for the task at hand.

During the ritual, the ghost in the shell is instructed to find the answer to the question that has been given by the client. Pull the leg down on a particular side if the response is positive, and on the other side if the answer is no. In this case, the leg dropped on the positive side more times than on the other side so in answer to the question about whether the next year will be a happy one, the answer is mostly yes, but there will be difficult times. The ghost in the galaa also speaks in the mind of Ajarn, which helps him form an understanding as to how the next year will be for the client.

In retrospect, he was correct with this reading as the ritual was made in July, and this interview is being transcribed around ten months later. When later holding the galaa used for this ritual it felt like Prai, rather than like a galaa and on asking Ajarn about this, he said yes, it becomes a Prai item, because it is akin to a 'ghost's house'.

Fortune telling with an alms bowl (Bat Mun - 'circling alms bowl')

The Bat Mun is a method that is used to predict the future luck associated with the wealth of the devotee, and with a persons' health. Where a person is sick, it predicts whether they will recover, how long that process will take, or how long someone has to live. The bowl has kata inscribed upon it in both Lanna and Khom script, and again, a spirit is put into the pot to aid Ajarn to determine the results of the ritual.

With this ritual, the person sits in front of Ajarn A, and places both index fingers onto the edge of the bowl while Ajarn chants. The fingers are placed very lightly on the bowl, which allows it to spin one way or the other, and this is what reveals the answer to Ajarn. Inside the bowl are flowers, incense sticks, candles, puffed rice (*Puffed rice - is to rice as popcorn is to corn). The rice will be dried off and heated in a pan until it pops out of its chaff and the chaff removed. Puffed rice is often used in any auspicious ceremonies with flowers as it is believed to bring luck and fortune. A little money is placed in the bowl by people requesting the ritual as a bribe to the ghost, and this then cannot then be used by the living, it becomes 'ghost money' for it to 'spend'. If the bowl gets too full of notes, Ajarn removes them and places the pile near to his Kuman Thong.

The Bat Mun is a very popular ritual for the local people, and Ajarn has even had movie stars coming to ask for advice, which always creates a lot of interest with the neighbours.

The Phi Maai Kan Ritual (The spirit in the wood ritual)

In this method, two lengths of wood (each over a metre long) are balanced on the middle finger of each hand while the person sits in the position for meditation and performs Samathi. Ajarn uses the same ghost with this ritual, and he affects the balance of the wood to give the required answers to the question posed. The pieces can move up or down and left, or right and each direction tells Ajarn the answer but, of course, Ajarn A gives no information to the client as to what the directions indicate. It is also good to often change the way the instructions are provided to the ghost so Ajarn cannot be second-guessed and in this way he can be sure that the answer is genuine.

These pieces of wood come from a farm and have been used to beat the husks from the rice (the patina is exceptional), but it can be any wood that is used for manual labour, like the wood traditionally used for carrying the two baskets on the shoulder. Old wood also weighs less, and this makes it easier for the ghost to move it. This method of fortune telling is quite well known but the one using the galaa is rare, and Ajarn A knows of no one else performing that ritual.

Phi Phu Yaa (Grandfather Ghost Yaa)

The bowl is old and used for making sticky rice, but the shirt did not belong to anyone, it is only for the spirit inside to feel a sense of life. When local people want to know the future, it is common to say, 'let's ask Phi Phu Yaa', and they will come for a reading. Usually, the person would come with a small tray as an offering that would have rice, a candle and a small amount of money for the request. The bowl itself is kept resting on rice when not being used and the rice is akin to an offering. With this method, the ghost is not my Kuman; it is an ancestor ghost that helps Ajarn tell the fortune of the person who makes the request. The ritual involves a person letting the 'body' rest on both hands, and then Ajarn chants a very old-fashioned kata which includes the question that needs answering. Holding the bowl feels very strange indeed, and there was a spirit inside, and during the kata Ajarn rocks the bowl from side to side, allowing the 'arms' to strike the floor.

Ajarn prefers using the other systems to tell fortunes because this is heavy and the ghost is very rough with the actions, which is tough when sat in the position of Samathi as it hurts his back a little. The problem is that Phi Phu Yaa is efficient in his predictions and is often specially requested by the person enquiring about their future. Many local people and rich people come here when they have a difficult decision to make and asking the advice of this spirit helps them at that time. A simple question is always best, they don't need too many details about the situation, and the ghost prefers it this way. The ghost will answer any problem, but sometimes it refuses to if it thinks that the person asking does not want to accept the answer.



125. Ajarn A with his Phi Phu Yaa. Ajarn said that he would readily accept a Luksit to learn this method of fortune telling as he does not want it to die out.



126. **The Satuang Ritual.** Some of the work to construct these has to be done by ladies and some by men. These local ladies will love it that they are in the book.



127. Ajarn Suea blessing water in readiness for the client, who is looking to clean their past.



128. The Satuang ritual is to release problems from the past or previous lives.

The Satuang Ritual - an interview with Ajarn Suea

After seeing this ritual performed many times, information about the process has been added to the interview with Ajarn, who is famous for this ceremony and only Ajarn Suea holds the full Wicha for the Satuang ritual.

The Satuang ritual is a traditional, ancient Lanna ceremony that was often made when a man returned from war, but it is now rarely made with this in mind. In today's world, it is now performed primarily to improve the life of a person, or to bring success in business. The Satuang ritual relies strongly on the calculation of the correct day through astrology, and is not effective unless performed on the most auspicious day. When devotees request this ritual they are often a little disappointed that it cannot be done immediately, but it will not work if not on the correct day. One of the roles of an Ajarn is to help people, and therefore he has to be strict with the rules of any process to ensure the best results.

There are many varieties of this ritual and the most popular is to cast off some evil or inauspicious attachment, which harks back to its original purpose as it was made after a war. In Thailand, many believe that when someone has an abortion, they can be haunted by the child's spirit, and the Satuang ritual can be performed to stop this, getting the child's spirit to be reborn. The same result can be achieved when a person dies in some horrific way, because that spirit will not be able to let go of this realm and be born again. Some times, people also have a ghost plaguing them from a previous life, attached to them because of a bad deed and this ritual will break that attachment. With this ritual, the person requesting it is present, but if that is not possible, they can provide their name, birth date, the day on which it fell, their animal and a small lock of hair to represent them.

This Wicha was passed to Ajarn by Kruba Duang Dee, who is very famous in this region and Ajarn Suea was his Luksit. Satuang in Thai means an offering in the form of a kratong (like a basket or boat) and the Satuang itself is constructed from the banana tree. With the building of the Satuang, ladies make most of the inside offerings, which included gold and silver paper that represents jewellery for the Grandmother and Grandfather spirits of Pu Taen/Yaa Taen (ancient ancestor spirits). There was Papaya on sticks of wood that had been used to pierce people's ears, the berries from palm, Miang leaves, rice, bread, apples, boiled eggs, bananas, wrappings of curries, sugar cane carved into spears, betel nut and flags. There are two Satuang made for different purposes, and one has 12 flags and one 9, with the nine flag Satuang having nine sections for food offerings. There are also clay figures of animals, angels, cats, mice, cows and tigers, and they are made to be deliberately primitive, so Pu Taen/Yaa Taen will not think that the person is rich already, and therefore doesn't need their help. These figures have to be made by men. There is also talcum powder and even small clothes for Yaa Taen, and there are around ten different ways to

make the Satuang Ritual, depending on the required effect. The process of making a Satuang is strictly divided into work for men and work for women. Men cannot do women's work, and vice versa or the ritual will be void.

If the person is present, they will sit in front of Ajarn while he chants the spell and then that person will Sompoi water poured on their head, allowing it to fall onto the Satuang, which is then circled three times over the client. The number of offerings is calculated through their birthday astrology to get the correct amount of dolls present, and the placing of the clay dolls also has great importance. If the astrology denotes that there should be a mouse clay doll, it has to be at the front while a corresponding cat clay doll must be at the back. If there is a cow clay doll at the front, then there must be a tiger at the back, and these animals represent the different astrological characteristics of the person involved. In this ritual, a mouse represents misfortune, and any placed in the Satuang has to have a cat at the back to chase it away.

There are many of these Satuang rituals for different purposes, and they are used to help people through difficult times. Recently, there was a client who was going through a period in their astrology called *Tok Soon* in the Northern traditions, which means that the person will meet with great misfortune, maybe losing money, a business failing, having an accident or even death, and they came for the corresponding Satuang ritual to attempt to avert this fate.

Having now witnessed Ajarn Suea perform this ritual for three people, two of them present and one of them not, it has been interesting to see how the client is affected. With the ceremony where the client was not present, he was asked to sit in Samathi at the exact time that the ritual was performed and to 'accept' the ritual. The people who were present were often given other tasks. One was asked to release some none scaly fish (which in this case were catfish) into the river after the ritual. Ajarn explained that saving a life that was to be ended has the highest merit associated with it, which he thought appropriate with this client. The other was asked to burn a magic candle at the temple of Kruba Duang Dee and to make tamboon, but these actions are dictated by Ajarn Suea as he is aware of the steps that need to be taken to fix the life. The ritual is quite long and intense, and on each occasion, the devotee reported feeling oddly refreshed. Two of them later stated that the feeling has remained, months after the ritual itself.

After the ceremony, the Satuang are put into a flowing river, but the side that it is put in first is important, as is every aspect of this strange and ancient ceremony.

From page 248, a few photographs from Wai Kru Ceremonies.



129. The Satuang is both a popular and important ritual.



130. **Photographs from Wai Kru Days**, where devotees and Ajarns congregate in support of an Ajarn. Here, the Wai Kru of Ajarn Khaw.



131. As part of this Wai Kru, the Ajarns present collectively made a Saneah oil. The Wai Kru is great to witness; a chance to see the Ajarns working together.



132. Blessings are also given by the Ajarns present to locals and devotees alike. These two photographs are again from the Wai Kru of Ajarn Khaw.



133. The Wai Kru of an Ajarn is a popular and happy event, usually held in the first few months of the Thai New Year (May and June).



134. More photographs from the Wai Kru Day of Ajarn Ting.
Here is a good view of his old style Lanna Sak Yant as he gives a blessing.



135. Rows of Ajarns giving their services, donating in support of the Wai Kru day for Ajarn Nahn Ting.



136. **Rare forms of Sak Yant** - The Salika Lin Thong.
The ritual involves tattooing a Yant Na onto the tongue for enchanted speech.



137. With being on the tongue, it is not an easy Yant to receive by the devotee but at least it is quick (fortunately).



138. After the tongue is tattooed, Na are also drawn onto the face.

Strange, Ancient and Rare Sak Yant

The Salika Lin Thong for enchanted speech

An interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

The Salika Lin Thong is akin to a cross between a Sak Yant and a ritual where the tongue is tattooed with an oil, with the Nam Yaa Wahn 108 and Wahn Saneah oils being the most commonly used. The ritual begins with placing gold leaf on to the tongue, and a Yant is written on the gold using a Maa Kru. Then, a Yant Na is tattooed using the rod, which can be quite a shock to the devotee as the tongue is a delicate area. During the whole process, Ajarn will chant the relevant kata, which are both involved and energetic.

There are rules for having a Salika Lin Thong, and not following them renders the Yant ineffective. A person who holds the Salika Lin Thong can not swear or use bad words, and cannot say bad things either to or about their parents. It is also forbidden to disrespect the Ajarn or anything sacred, and the devotee must know this before having this Yant. The time of tattooing is quite short, but because it is on the tongue, it can be quite a challenge for the devotee. After tattooing the Yant, gold leaf is put on the face, which can be seen as an extra part of the ritual to boost the attributes of the Salika Lin Thong. Ajarn places gold leaf on the two cheeks, the forehead and the chin to represent the four directions, and for every direction travelled, the Salika Yant will help with negotiations and charming speech. With this ritual, each Ajarn has a different method, with some using little gold and some covering the face completely.

During the time that Ajarn Perm Rung applied the Salika Lin Thong onto the tongue, the kata could be felt physically, and had a strong effect on all those present. The Salika Lin Thong is a popular and effective form of magic, and Ajarn Rung does an exceptional job with this ritual. Rituals such as this constitute 'one on one' magic, which is important devotees of magic. Some people worry about the pain, but this is a small, quick tattoo, although the shock of someone jabbing a needle in the tongue requires a little adjustment.

A Salika Yant Na by Ajarn Khaw

During an interview with Ajarn Khaw about his Salika amulet, the conversation drifted onto other ways to bring enchantment to speech using the Salika Wicha. Ajarn Khaw bestows a very ancient Yant for Salika that is a type of Yant Na, and the position of it on the body has to be on the front shoulder. It is only given in oil as it is believed that some magic needs to be hidden, but the power of it can be accessed at any time. The Yant is placed on the front shoulder to make it within reach of the tongue, and when the devotee needs enchanted speech with lovers or in business, the Sak Yant is licked.

The Human Heart Spell for the Mouth

This is a variant of the Salika Lin Thong Yant ritual by Ajarn Suea

When an Ajarn makes the Salika Lin Thong ritual for enchanted speech, some devotees are disappointed that the tongue will not hold the ink, so this variant allows for a permanent tattoo inside the lower lip. The tattoo consists partly of the Hua Jai Manut kata (Human Heart Kata) and the Salika kata, meaning that it works like the better known Salika Lin Thong in that the tattoo enchants the words as they are emitted from the mouth.

There are also two other types of tattoo that can go into the mouth, which are for extremely strong Saneah - the Hua Jai Phu Chai (Male Heart Kata) and Hua Jai Phu Ying (Female Heart Kata). The male version goes under the top lip, and the female under the bottom lip, and both Heart Katas act to enchant the speech. The Hua Jai Phu Chai tattoo can never be shown to anyone or it nullifies the magic, but luckily it is placed as high as possible under the top lip. A man usually has the heart kata for the lady in his mouth, and the lady the heart kata for the man as these are for attracting people of the opposite sex, but Ajarn Suea has both as he draws all people to him. The only rule for having the male heart kata is that the person cannot then perform oral sex, but they can if they have the female heart kata.

Sak Yant for Specific Attributes - an interview with Ajarn Verataep

On arriving at the Samnak of Ajarn Verataep to interview him about his history and the Nang Prai, Ajarn was giving Sak Yant to a lady. When she emerged, she had various pieces of gold leaf on her lips, forehead, hands, stomach and legs, so an interview was undertaken with Ajarn concerning this work.

There are many ways to bestow Sak Yant, and one of them is through applying Yant Na for specific purposes that have been requested by the devotee, in this case, a rather beautiful lady. These can be applied in ink or one of many specific oils, and can be for many purposes, Saneah, Klaew Klaat (avoidance of danger), Kong Grapan (invincibility), Nang Niew (impenetrable skin), Metta or anything the person desires. In this case, it was for Saneah, so a Wahn Saneah oil was mixed in with the sesame oil that is normally used for a Yant in oil, and a Yant Na tattooed on specific areas of the body. These areas also vary depending on the attribute required. For charming speech the Yant Na is tattooed in the mouth or on the tongue. To be famous or to make themselves appealing to others, then it would be the Na Naa Thong ritual, where the Na is drawn onto the gold on the face

In this case, the lady was tattooed on the stomach for bringing a lover as well as on the thigh, meaning that the Saneah will work when she walks as movement activates that tattoo. For the Yant Na on the face, it is obvious as



139. *The Human Heart Spell for the Mouth.* My thanks to Leon for all the photos.



140. A Korb Sian blessing after the Human Heart Spell for the Mouth Yant.



141. Yant Na for specific attributes by Ajarn Verataep.



142. Judge from the strength of grip as to how much these hurt.

to their effect, and the same with the hands, where the Saneah is passed through touch. If the lady had wanted say Chok Laap, the Na would be tattooed on the hand to call money to it. There are hundreds of Yant Na for each attribute, and each can be applied depending on the Ajarn's ability with that particular Yant.

In this case, Ajarn is fulfilling the role of a kind of spiritual doctor, applying to the skin what each person requests and helping them with their life.

Mon Meu Top - Slapping Hand Kata - an interview with Ajarn Suea

The slapping action in the name of this spell means to slap the heart to fulfil any wishes (please note that emotions and feelings are expressed through using the word heart in Thailand, so instead of say, hot-headed, they say hot heart). The Mon Meu Top are a class of tattooed spells, and there are many variations. They are used to influence other people, to get rid of ill fortune as well as for calling good luck.

Each of the variations involves the tattooing of kata on to a specific part of the hand. The kata involved consists of words that describe an action, like:

I can beat down an elephant

I can beat any person down

I can beat the water and fire

I can beat the sky

I can beat her heart to call for me. Many different types.

The kata being tattooed in the photograph was for Metta and Maha Niyom, and the devotee can use it in negotiations and for business, influencing the people present with a touch. There is no need to slap or to beat down, which is another translation of Top, the kata adds magic to the hand that can be passed on to others.

There are two positions used on the hand for these spells, one in line with the thumb and one in line with the little finger but both places are quite painful (look at how the hand in the photograph is being held to stop any movement). The one close to the little finger is usually for Kong Grapan and the ones near the thumb are for charming through Saneah, Metta or Maha Niyom. The Kong Grapan spell near the little fingers works against people trying to inflict harm on the devotee, and it acts to turn back a beating, meaning that they hurt themselves instead.

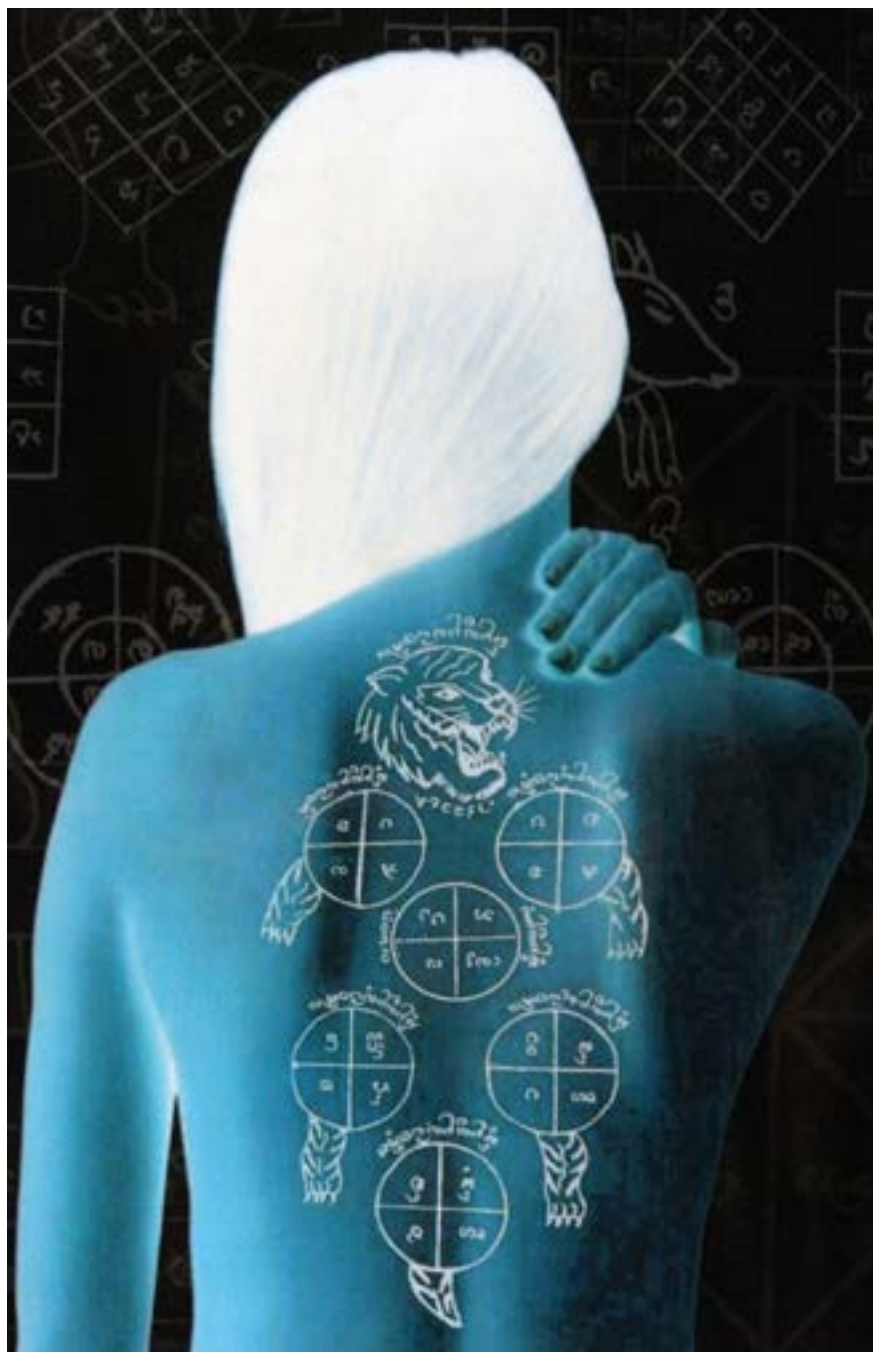
The Rare Sak Yant of Ajarn Tui

The modern industry of Sak Yant bears only a passing resemblance to the Sak Yant of old, and unfortunately, much of the ancient knowledge is being lost. With the old Masters passing away, many do not leave a dedicated Luksit to take on their Wicha, and often, the family will burn a renowned magicians Wicha books. When a powerful magician dies, things can get a little wild because the person controlling everything has passed on, and some Wicha books are considered to be alive. Burning them can ease the burden on the family or spouse of a strong Ajarn, but it does mean that the culture loses knowledge.

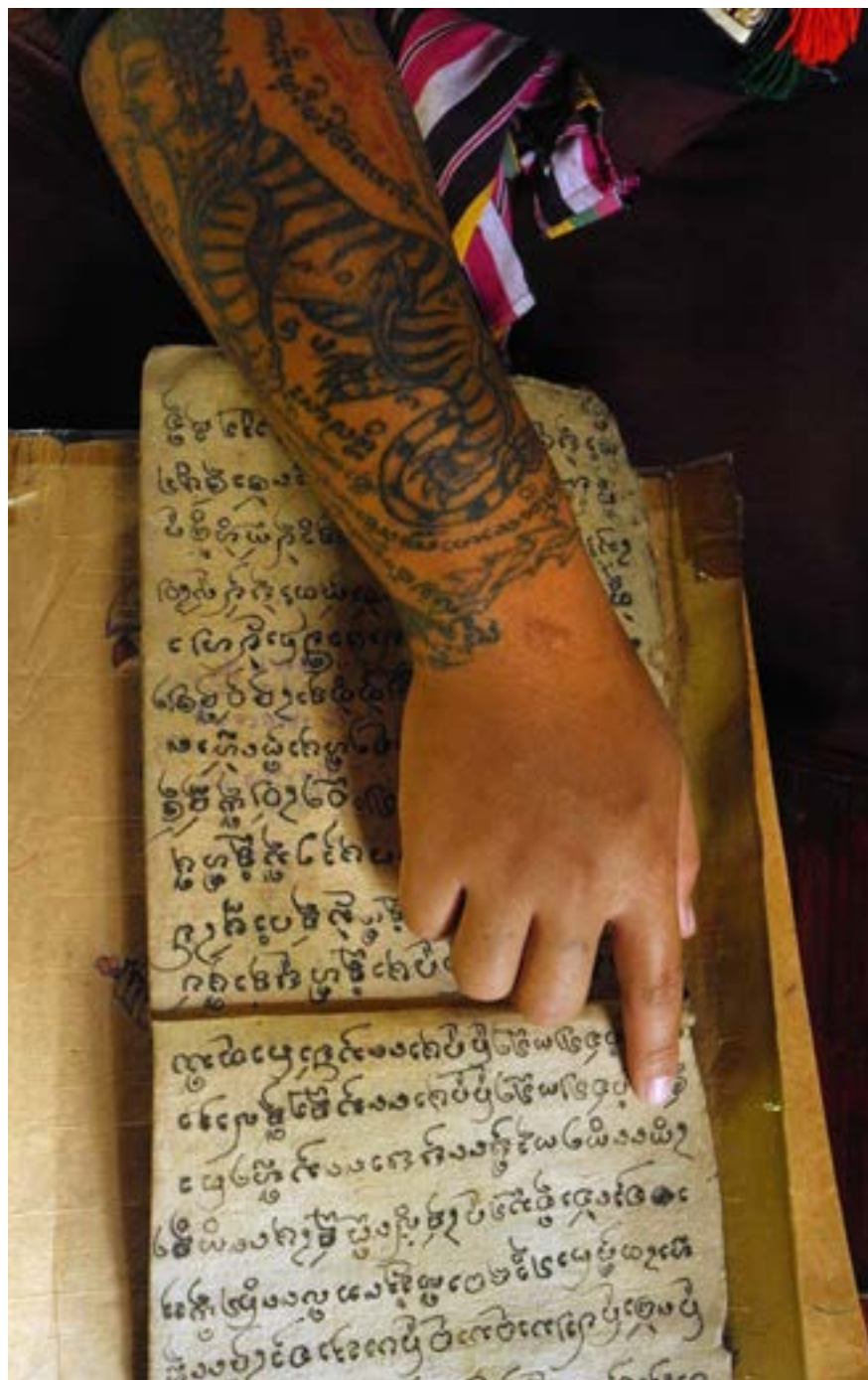
In the old times, there were not the age restrictions on having a tattoo that there is today, and people could be given a Sak Yant when as young as four years old, which was usually for the protection from evil spirits. The Lanna region was more dangerous at that time, full of wild animals, and wars were common, so people needed protection and magic. If a person takes the time to understand some of the Yants held by Ajarn Tui, they will see that the magic within them follows ancient rules that can be very complex, but it produces strongly enchanted tattoos. Ajarn Tui believes that in time, the bestowing of Sak Yant will split into two categories with the first category producing the modern Yants, the Yants that are tattooed by the thousand every year in Thailand. The second category will be for the very old Yants, which are now rarely bestowed, but the interest in them is rising as some people want the original Sak Yant. These ancient Yants cost more due to the time it takes to make them, and the devotee needs to plan because sometimes, they can only be tattooed on certain days. The Wicha of some Yants requires their application to be in a specific place, and Ajarn's most special Yant involves FOUR locations. Ajarn Tui and the devotee has to move four times to finish the Yant - the *Suea Jet Pod*.

The Suea Jet Pod Yant

The Suea Jet Pod is a famous, ancient Yant, but what is not well known is that the people who were born in the year of the Tiger should never receive it and the same is true for those born in the year of the cow. A person who has a bad temper should also not have this Yant; it is not good for the hot-headed as they will lose control due to the power in this Yant. Before tattooing this Tiger Yant, the devotee would have to take a vow with the Ajarn about the rules for the behaviour. If the devotee cannot keep their word they should not have the tattoo because otherwise, they could become what is referred to as a Suea Yen, effectively being possessed by a Tiger. There are two types of Tiger possession in the Lanna traditions. The Suea Saming is the fixed state of having a Tiger inside, dominating the person, and it can send people crazy. If a devotee becomes a Suea Yen, they have a chance to be normal again, but they are seen as having a Tiger's body and a human face.



143. One version of the classic Lanna Sak Yant - The Suea Jet Pod.
 (and folks, I have altered all the Yants in this book to stop copying)



144. A Lanna Wicha book on Yants in a graveyard.

'Pod' is an old word that means parts, inferring that when the parts used to make this Yant come together, it boosts the power, akin to seven Tigers in one body. Ajarn Tui tattoos the head of the Tiger in front of the Buddha image in a temple, and the old Wicha dictates that there has to be raw beef hanging above him. Once the tattooing of the head is complete, the devotee would then have to leap up like a Tiger and grab the meat in his 'claws' to eat it. Many of the main halls of Wats are now much taller than they used to be so where this is not possible, the raw meat is passed to the devotee. A piece of fresh beef is consumed after each part of the Yant has been completed, meaning that the person has to eat seven pieces in all.

Tattooing the front legs are done in a Wat, but not in front of the Buddha.

Tattooing the central Yant is done in the graveyard in the place where they burn the body.

Tattooing the back legs occurs in a place that has been made evil through the presence of a bad spirit, and the tail is applied anywhere.

The final part of this process is where the Ajarn and the devotee return to the Samnak for the Pruk Saek. All the parts need to be tattooed on the same day, but there is also an astrological aspect, so the day needs to be arranged in advance. Sometimes, a devotee will have to wait for a month, and that is very difficult for many people, especially these days as everyone wants everything done immediately.

The components of the ink used for this Sak Yant are also essential as it has to contain Tiger Oil, which includes the gallbladder of a Tiger and ground Tiger tooth, and it has to be mixed using a fang. Ajarn Tui makes this ink, and it will not be black as it is hand blended, usually coming out as grey, with the colour sitting back in the skin. This Tiger Yant can only be placed higher than the waist but can be of any size that the devotee desires.

The Suea Jet Pod Yant offers extreme Kong Grapan and Maha Amnat and is only applied to the skin of a person who is already in a position of authority. People who are of an angry disposition should beware, and those born in the years of the cow and Tiger should not have this Yant. The ancient Lanna rules about having a Suea Jet Pod include not consuming water or food left by somebody else (a monk or the Ajarn is OK), which is a rule that is easy to break. It is also forbidden to eat at a funeral or sleep with someone else's wife. The bearer should not walk under a house, the staircase or under-garments on a washing line, but if a hat is worn, it is OK, though the cap has to have a kata on it. In many old Lanna houses, the floors often have two layers of wood rather than one as the extra layer protects the people who have Sak Yant who may be below. If the devotee makes a mistake with this rules, it is OK as long as they use a Sompoi bath to clean away any defilement and actually, it is best to use Sompoi regularly to help the Yant anyway.

This magic is famous and very old, but is now rare to see. It is a legendary Lanna Wicha, but Ajarn believes that the image of this tiger came from Tibet a long time ago, gaining it's magic as it travelled through Burma, and is now regarded as ancient Lanna Wicha.

A Rare Lanna Rahu - an interview with Ajarn Tui

This Yant is a Rahu in the traditional Lanna Muang script, and the design can also be a Pha Yant for the home. Unusually, it is for all Rahu, the god Rahu in general, rather than being one for the sun or the moon, because it is an ancient Yant from before they separated his roles. *(Normally a design is either for a Sak Yant or a Pha Yant and the ones that can be either are rare)*

This Yant works the best if tattooed on the day of a full moon, but it is not necessary to bestow it in the moonlight, on the same day is perfect. It can also be applied to the skin when the moon is in eclipse, and this does not need to be a full eclipse, a half or a quarter is fine. Ajarn Tui consults the astrological calendar before setting the date that this can be tattooed.

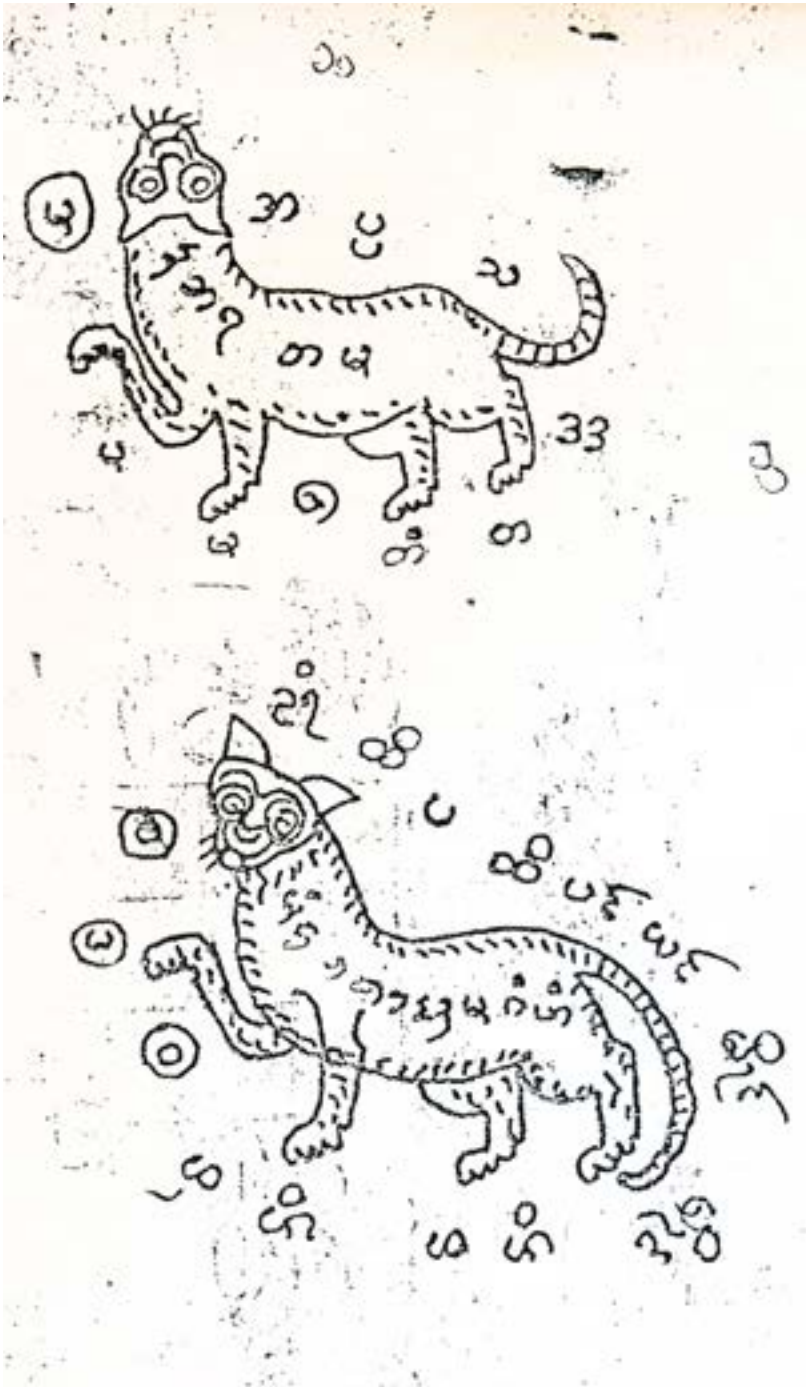
This Yant is bestowed with the 32 parts of the body during the blessing process, effectively making Rahu alive on your skin. It is considered to be an amulet in the skin, not a normal Sak Yant. This Rahu is for Serm Duang, the attribute to change the fate and destiny of the bearer, but it is also for strong protection when travelling or in strange places. This Rahu also brings a natural authority and protects against black magic attack as well as the lower ghosts. Ajarn regards it as one of the best Yants for people who work with the spirits. Rahu protects you from the Prai, and even Masters need protection like this.

Another remarkable aspect of this Yant is that it changes a persons Feng Shui, helping the person be more at ease in the energies in the home, protecting them from any negative aspects that may be present. As a Pha Yant, this is particularly useful to protect a house that is considered to be in a wrong location, like at a crossroads.

The rules for having this Yant are the same as for the Suea 7 Pod. Do not drink the water or eat the food that has been left by somebody else (a monk or the Ajarn is OK), which is a rule that is easy to break. It is also not allowed to eat at a funeral or sleep with someone else's wife. The bearer should not walk under a house, the staircase or under-garments on a washing line but if a hat is worn, it is OK, although the cap has to have a kata written on the inside. In many old Lanna houses, the floors often have two layers of wood rather than one as the extra layer protects the people who have Sak Yant. If a mistake is made with these rules, it is OK as a Sompoi bath can be taken to clean away any defilement and actually, Sompoi should be regularly to help the Yant remain strong and pure.



145. An ancient Lanna Rahu Yant, held together with selotape.



146. Cat Yants for evasion should be made in the cemetery.



147. The excellent Ajarn Tui.



148. Applying a Yant to Khun Leon while sat in the cremation pit.

Yants applied in a Graveyard

There are specific reasons to apply a Sak Yant in a graveyard, and it is related to the power that resides in the grounds. The power comes from the spirits of dead people, some of whom die when it is not their time, and some who die when it is their natural time to pass. Applying a Yant in a cemetery is not just asking for help from the spirits there, it is also using the power within the location as well as the energy from the Ajarn and his Masters. Making a Sak Yant in a graveyard is a long-held tradition in the Lanna system of magic because it makes the Yant powerful. Lanna tattoos used to be only made outside as they gained extra power from the location it was bestowed. For the quality of Metta for instance, it is best that the Yant be tattooed in a new crematorium, one that has never been used. The rules for these Yants varies with each Samnak, but generally, for Metta and Saneah Yants, the devotee is not allowed to have an affair.

The primary type of Yants applied in a graveyard are for protection and invincibility, but there are other famous examples.

Cat Yants

In the past, people who wanted a Cat Yant had to go into the graveyard, and be buried up to the neck. The Ajarn would then compact the earth down and leave them there before praying to the land spirit guardian of the graveyard, and those who got out of the ground unassisted could have the Cat Yant. No one does this now for obvious reasons, but if these Yants are applied in a graveyard, they have more power.

This Cat Yant consists of two tattoos, one of a male black cat and female black cat on each shoulder, and you lick them when you need the quality of evasion, tricking people's eyes into not being able to focus or follow the holder of these Yants. Cat Yants are famous for thieves, and those who need to evade the law. There's also a 12 Yant set of cat tattoos that go round the waist, and the last one has to be paid for with money that was stolen. This 12 Cat Yant is again for thieves or those that make a living illegally with the attribute of being able to escape any situation, not being caught. The Cat Yants are wonderfully simple old Lanna style tattoos that have a beauty all of their own.

Tiger Yants

Some Yants have to be made on top of the grave, like this Tiger Yant, which is called Suea Ahn and comes from an old grimoire that belongs to Ajarn Tui. The Suea Ahn is an ancient Yant for extreme Maha Amnat. The flags on the Sak Yant design are for victory in all aspects of life, and this Yant is a classic of the Lanna system that was heavily influenced by Burmese Sak Yant. Some Tiger Yants come in a set, a set of three and one must go on



149. The Ajarn seeks the aid of the spirits of the graveyard when blessing the Yant, which makes it magically strong.



150. A Yant in a graveyard is a strong experience.



151. The Na Kasan Thoranee Yant. This is a powerful Yant Na; it makes the eyes go fuzzy in the same way as when looking at a strong amulet.

the left arm, one on the right and the final one can be placed anywhere on the body. This example can be done on a grave, but it can also be tattooed in the Samnak although the power of it would be higher if tattooed in the graveyard.

Now people don't care much about the traditional Sak Yant, they care more about the beauty and the design rather than the magic. Everyone appreciates the beauty of the modern tattoos, and if a man has a Tiger Yant today it is usually fantastic prowling Tiger with the Akhara around it, but the original Tiger tattoos had the spells inside the body to power the Yant. There was more of a concern then with the quality of the magic, rather than the modern concepts of beauty.

The Sex Yants of Ajarn Khaw - Na Kasan Thoranee

Ajarn Khaw considers that this is the magic from a god for charm and sex. It is a Yant Na that can be put on the body as a Sak Yant and it has two positions. It is tattooed on the front of the body as an oil tattoo placed below the belly button in the area of the Dantien in Chinese acupuncture, and on the back of the body with ink. The position of the ink tattoo corresponds to the location of the oil tattoo on the front, like a line going through the torso. This Yant is an important tattoo that is rarely bestowed, but Ajarn does place it on his Luksit because of the power it brings. The photograph of this Na was interesting to take because sometimes, a talisman is so potent that it can make the vision a little fuzzy, and this was the case with this Yant.

The Na Kasan Thoranee is the sex magic of Shiva and Uma, and in Chinese principles, it evokes Yin Yang, the male and female elements and brings them together for powerful Metta. This knowledge came down to Ajarn through the Master of his Master, Ajarn Phor Daeng and there is a photograph of her in the Samnak, but no one is allowed to either photo or copy it. The Master is Mae Kru Krua, and Ajarn Khaw holds great respect for her.

This same Yant Na is also made as a Takrut for similar kama sutra powers, but it has to be written while resting on a naked lady's vagina. Ajarn held this ritual recently and during the same ceremony also made some Paladkhik (phallus amulets), and each was inserted a little way into the vagina. This blessing took almost two hours but the lady gained from the ritual too, attaining very strong Saneah.

There are numerous kinds of Yant for strong sex attraction in the Lanna system, with perhaps the Maleng Wan Kham (The Golden Fly) being the most famous. Most of the Lanna Masters know about making a Maleng Wan Kham, but they are all different because this Yant is in many lineages. Ajarn's Wicha for Maleng Wan Kham dictates that they are done in oil and put in the middle of the chest to attract people from the front, and in the same place on the back to attract people from behind.

The secret of Sak Yant for sex is to make them with oil so no one can see them as they may understand that magic is being used on them, which could break the spell. Many ink Sak Yant can go on the body for sex as well but they must either go close to the groin or on the upper leg - these include Inn Khoo, Maa Saep Nang, Phra Ngang and Mae Per. Ajarn recently had a playboy come to the Samnak asking for help as he wanted to have sex all the time, and Ajarn applied a Sak Yant to his dick with oil. The vagina can also be tattooed in the same way, pulling lovers to it and enchanting them in the process. The tattoo itself is made very gently and does not hurt too much, or so the playboy said. There are also many types of extreme sex magic rituals, but he cannot advertise them because Ajarn thinks they would break all the rules of decency and facebook would melt. Sex rituals such as these have to be requested.

Maa Khow Saai Yant - a Sex Yant from Ajarn Tui

(The name of this Yant means 'The Dog Enters Your Intestines' inferring that this love magic goes deep into the body) Long ago, the image of a dog was not put on to the skin, so with this Yant they often just tattooed the kata. The script under the Maa Khow Saai Yant is similar to an old Maa Saep Nang kata, and this is used today for the modern Lanna 9 Tail Fox Yants. This Yant consists of two tattoos that represent a female and a male dog, one of which goes on the left side and one on the right. The power of these Yants acts to change the bearer's skin into a Yaa Faet, which is a legendary substance for enchanting a person into becoming a sex slave, wholly fixated on the person who drugged them.

For the person who holds this Yant, if they like someone, they rub some of their skin into the person's drink or food to enchant them. The rubbed skin is not only from around the Yant but anywhere on the body. Long ago people used a lot of Yaa Faet for sexual enchantment, and the magic for this Yant goes deeply into the person, making every part of them a Yaa Faet.

When applying this Yant the ink must contain Ajarns constructed oils for Metta and Maha Niyom (including Wahn Dok Thong oil), and this tattoo can be made on any day as long as it is not a Buddha day. It can be placed anywhere on the body, which is unusual for low love magic such as this. During the blessing, the fire element kata is used to do the job of transforming the body into one that strongly attracts others, making them besotted. Originally, only men used to apply this Yant but times change, and women can also have this Yant.

When applying this Yant, Ajarn tattoos the dog first, and then the 32 parts of the body Pruk Saek is used to give it life, as with many amulets in the Lanna tradition. If the 32 parts of the body spell is not used, the dog cannot be a complete body. Following this, the script circles it to hold the magic in place. The dog is considered alive in this Yant, which helps it be powerful.



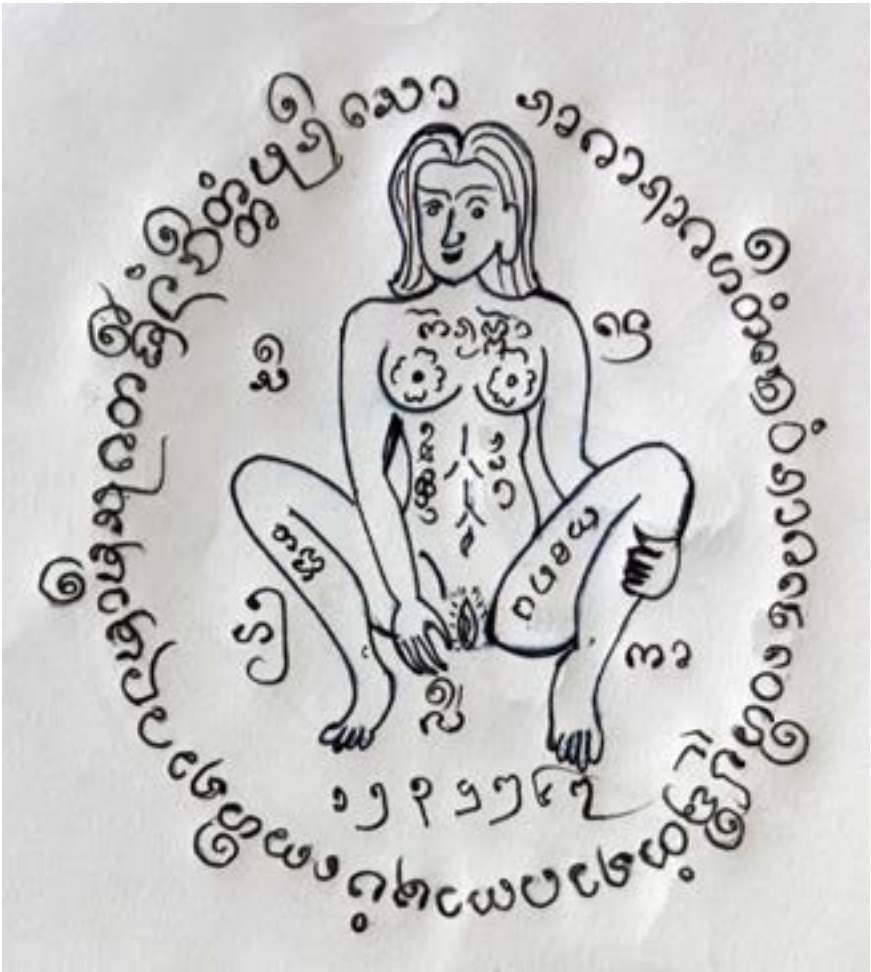
153. The original Wicha for the Maa Khao Sai Yant. Old magic.



153. Ajarn James with his corpse cloth Pha Yant to Phra Ngang.

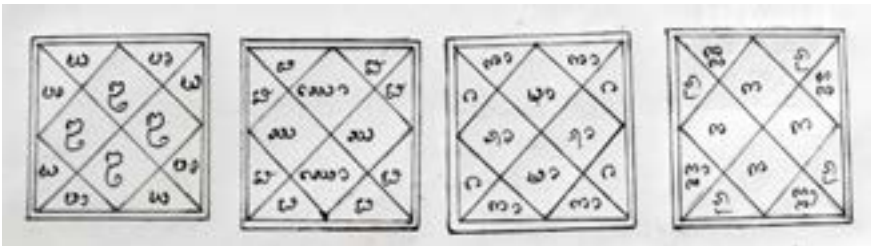


154. He makes his own oils and inks from the original Wicha. Ajarn has to have two rods, one for above the waist and one for below.



155. His hand drawn Mae Per (edited here) is a Lanna classic, for strong Saneah, Metta and Khaa Khaay.

156. Square Lanna Yants for Lust.



The Lanna Sex Yants of Ajarn James

Yants for sex magic are tattooed below the waist and are made using oil or ink, which can be black or red. Into the ink or oil, Ajarn James also places the correct herbal mixture. There are many recipes for the inks, which are dictated by the Wicha of each Yant, but by adding certain herbs, oils and even Leklai it will boost the power of the Yant beyond what is ordinarily possible. Giving the Yant the greatest power possible is essential to the role of an Ajarn as he is then helping the devotee with all his skills.

Ajarn James has two Sak Yant rods, because one is for above the waist and one is for below. If a rod is used to tattoo on the wrong part it would have to be thrown away after using it as Ajarn is not allowed to change the role of the rod. There are two pots of inks for a similar reason, and into these inks are put the various herbal mixtures that are a source of magical potency. These mixes are split into two categories, one for lower ranked Yants, and one set from the deities for spiritually higher Yants. There are also a few samples of real Leklai kept near to the inks, because it is an essential element for Kong Grapan and other forms of protective Yants.

Phra Ngang Heart Kata Yant

Phra Ngang Yants are exceptional for the sexual attraction that men strive for to gain many lovers, and this heart kata consists of both a complex Yant Na (Na Dang Meow, because it looks like a Cat's Nose) and three lines of Lanna script. The Phra Ngang Yant Na is placed around the area below the stomach, a few inches below the belly button and is a beautiful Yant to tattoo. There is also the full image of Phra Ngang as a Sak Yant for the right leg, which is one of Ajarn's favourite Yants, and he has this as a Pha Yant on corpse cloth. To bestow a highly effective Sex Yant, a Yaa Faet is also added to the ink to give it the power to enslave others sexually.

Mae Per Heart Kata

The Mae Per Heart kata is for lust and sexual needs, and is tattooed on the left leg. This kata can also be carried as a Takrut for a similar effect. There is also the more normal Mae Per Yant which would be placed on the left thigh of the lady, and it is a classic of the Lanna style. With the Wicha of Ajarn James, the Mae Per Yant is only for ladies and the Phra Ngang Yant is for men. For both of these styles of Yant, a Kata is also given to the bearer to help with the power of the Yant, which is the ancient style.

There are also Yants for around the nipples and for the pubic area, which act when a lover licks the nipples or the lower bits, and their purpose is to bind the lover to them. The Mae Per Heart kata is a tattoo that is often given to couples that may be having some problems in life to draw them back together.

Heart Kata for Lust

The Heart Kata for Lust is another classic and ancient Lanna Yant for sex.

The Thai word for lust is from the Pali for pleasure, and both are the root of the modern word for 'the price', which comes from lusting for something. This heart kata can be placed on both men and women and will work in the same way. The second square from the left of this set of magic squares is called Pa Saw Pa Sa, which generates a desire in others to touch you. In another of the squares, there is the action within it that ensures that this magic works on people born on any day of the week and between the four squares are all the elements of sexual desire that anyone can hope for. These are for exceptional levels of Saneah and have applied in this region for centuries. Ajarn James tattoos these Yant squares on the top of the thighs, with the two on the left, applied to the top of the left leg and the two right-hand ones on the right.

157. Opposite. Ajarn James in Samathi in his Samnak

Maa Saep Nang Yant

The Maa Saep Nang Yant is tattooed on the skin of either sex, and it is bounded on the four corners by representations of the penis that spread the magic in the four directions. The Maa Saep Nang brings Metta and Maha Niyom (popularity), and although commonly found on Pha Yant all over the Lanna region, it is also famous as a tattoo. With this sex Yant, Ajarn also includes a Yaa Faet in the ink, and part of the kata around the figures specifically affects people born on any day in the week. If this Yant is to help people with business, a Heart Kata for merchants is added with the specific intent to charm people to part with their money.

The script below the lady is a Lady Heart Kata to loosen the hearts of women, and the one in the lower right corner is called the Laughing God Heart Kata, which makes the bearer of this Yant easy to get along with. The top right script is called the Dog's Heart Kata and is for pure Saneah. As with many Sex Yants, this is tattooed on either the ladies left leg or the man's right.

The image of a horse fucking a woman may be a little too much for modern tastes, but this is a Yant that is placed on the upper thigh, making it rarely seen. The magic this classic Yant offers can be valuable in life, and it can also be made in oil if the bearer is shy regarding the image.



The Sex Magic Tattoos of Ajarn Suea

Most of the sex magic tattoos from Ajarn Suea consist of Hua Jai Kata such as, Hua Jai Yoni, Hua Jai Rakhaa and Hua Jai Paladkhik. There are many of these, and they are spells written in the groin area, which is a painful place for tattoos. Mostly, these are tattooed above the pubic hair region, but some also go along the crease between the legs and the private area. As there are so many of these, it is best to look at the persons Horasart aspects (astrology) before deciding which Heart Kata should be applied.

Ajarn Suea often tattoos a Heart kata in conjunction with an image. For instance, if a Phra Ngang Sak Yant is on the upper thigh, around it would be the Phra Ngang Heart Kata, and underneath is the kata that wakes the Ngang to bring him to life. Many of these sex tattoos are applied to the skins of night workers, and in that case, the Ngang is more commonly tattooed on a lady than a man, because more ladies are in that line of work. Generally, Ajarn Suea recommends a Mae Per Yant for ladies and a Phra Ngang Yant for men, but either sex can have them if requested. These Yants are for strong sex magic, which is very useful for people in the night industry or for those who want to enhance their enchantment.

When Ajarn Suea makes a sex tattoo close to the private parts, the Pruk Saek cannot be done in the same way due to the restrictions contained in the rules of being an Ajarn. All that is possible in this region is to apply gold leaf. Usually, four leaves will be used unlike the usual three, so the tattoo is then not disrespecting Buddhist beliefs. Ajarn Suea makes an oil to an ancient recipe to add to the ink, and this oil takes the attributes directly into the body of the devotee, ensuring that Ajarn Suea's sex magic has good results. The Wahn in the oil includes Wahn Dok Thong, Wahn Mae Phe (which is very rare!), Wahn Saneah, many different types.

There are also Sak Yant for the nipples as it is an erogenous zone. Men have the spell on the right nipple and ladies on the left, and they are again for attraction, utterly enchanting anyone who licks or sucks that nipple.

These tattoos are spells, just Akhara in a line and usually in a private place. Ajarn Suea has many more examples of these, and at the end of the interview he pulled out a thick Wicha book that contains his collection of Hua Jai Kata. This small selection appears to be a drop in the ocean of knowledge that is held by Ajarn Suea. Just before this book went to press, a friend had a Yant for attraction from Ajarn and the actions after its application produced a magic that almost knocked me off my feet. This needs more investigation as they are a strong source of magical force.

Burmese Sak Yant - an interview with Ajarn Sala Boon Khong

The Sak Yant from Burma and Thailand were very similar in the past, when it was common for those enslaved to have Sak Yant tattoos as a mark of ownership but they were not usually applied to the noble classes. One of the main differences between the Thai and Burmese systems is that in Thailand they use Wahn to give power to their oils (the recipes for which varies between every maker) but in Burma they use a mixture that comes from the various Nikai cults that praise the Weikza (Ajarn described these as a herbal drug rather than a Wahn, but he could not explain precisely how it differs). In Burma, there are also considerations as to which day and time the Yant should be performed as well as which place. This astrological aspect of the tattooing has been all but lost in Thailand but is still of paramount importance in the Burmese system.

There are similarities between the cultures of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Burma which can be seen in the temples of this region and this is the same with Sak Yant. It does not mean that each culture took things from each other, cultures share knowledge over the centuries, especially when there was often no solid border in the same way as there is today. The traditional Sak Yant of Thailand usually has what can be termed as a high class of magic that is aimed at the Buddha, the Lersi or various deities. In Burma the tattoos have various classes of magic, either low, middle or high, giving choices as to which magic to use to achieve the wishes of the devotee. The lower class tattoos in Thailand are often related to sexual needs and desires, which are usually placed below the waist. There is no such distinction within the Burmese system and tattoos for anything can be placed anywhere, but the power varies depending on position. Some of the higher ranked Yants can be tattooed on the lower part of the body in Burma as well because they do not follow the rule that the different parts of the body have different effects. In Myanmar, a sex tattoo can be placed anywhere on the body as there is no cultural taboo regarding its position although as stated previously, the power available in each location may vary.

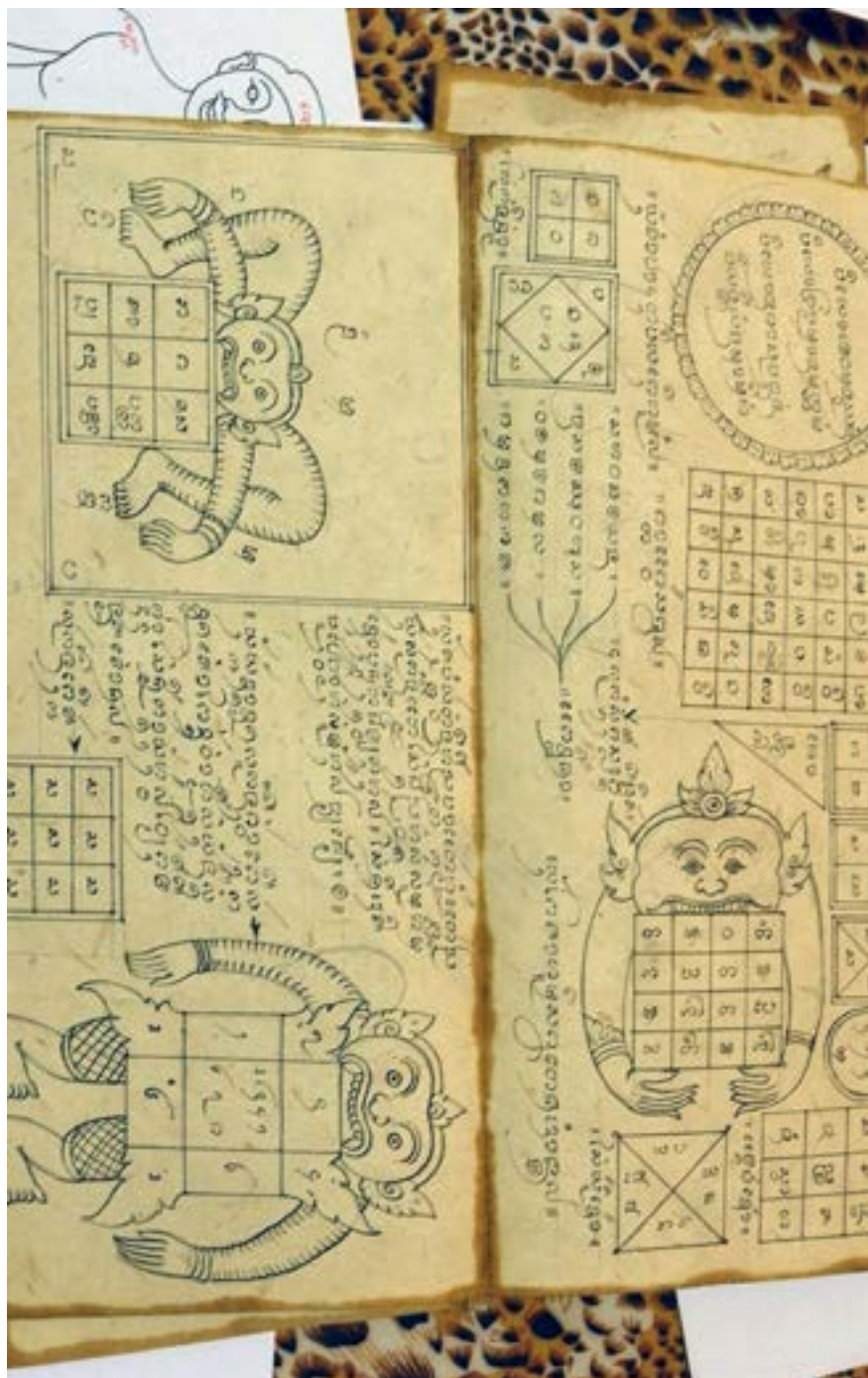
For someone who decides to have a tattoo under the Burmese system, it is not only about having a Yant for good luck or Saneah. Most of the people who have Sak Yant in Burma have a serious interest in magic and study the art deeply. To research magic or to have power over ghosts takes a strong magician, and the person has to be willing to disregard Buddhism as much as possible as well as lower the boon within themselves. In this regard, some magicians in Burma have a Buddha tattooed on their feet, and Ajarn freely admits with an added wry smile that he would like one of these. Ajarn Boon Khong considers this action analogous to a Westerner having an upside-down cross tattoo, it gives them magical options and brings dominion over a religion, adding power to any magic undertaken. A Thai Ajarn would judge this as following the way of a Mhor Phi, but really, it is just another option in the pursuit of magical knowledge.

In Burma, the place where the Yant is applied is important, such as in a dry river, on top of a stand-alone hill, under a big tree, a graveyard, in a cave, in a freshly dug hole or an abandoned temple and the chosen location depends on the magic the devotee desires. In each place, the Ajarn will ask for help from the guardian spirits, a ghost, a deva or an angel and each will bring a different power to the Yant. In Thailand, the Yant will have only the power of the deva or deity chosen, and they do not use ghosts or guardian spirits to help with the power of the tattoo. In Burma, they use every source of energy that is available to them, and for example, many types of ghosts can be used rather than 'a generic ghost'. The Burmese will use any spirit they can because there are limitations when only using the higher spirits, but the lower spirits can be called upon to do anything (The Nats).

If the same Yant is tattooed in a different location, it produces different magic. If a Tiger Yant were done at home or done in an abandoned temple, the power would not be the same as the surrounding spirits would have different levels of energy to help with the empowerment. The Ajarn will choose the location for the placing of the Yant depending on what he considers is best for the devotee. There are different levels of tattoo for different people. For some one who wants to become an Ajarn, he may get the full power tattoo, using a powerful spirit but ordinary people may not be able to handle it, and some Akhara may be omitted. It all depends on who the devotee is, what they want and what the Ajarn considers is best for them. Some tattoos come with specific rules, and if those rules cannot be followed, it may not just make the magic stop working but could end up harming the bearer of the Yant. With some, it is forbidden to walk under a coffin or eat at a funeral or wedding. The devotee cannot eat anything that has come from any spiritual activity, and all these considerations need to be taken into account when deciding on what to bestow on a person's skin.

There is distinct imagery in the Burmese Sak Yant system, but this aspect is less important than the ink used because the ink contains the herbal mixture that bestows much of the power to the Yant. The scripts are also just Akhara, but these seemingly isolated letters have specific meanings depending on the arrangement, and their construction seems to be unique.

When people come for a Burmese Yant tattoo, they first need to say what they desire, and Ajarn will then consider which Yant to bestow and how strong the magic should be because if that person cannot follow the rules, it can bring harm to them. There is much interest in this system at this time as these Yants are ancient and many devotees want to return to the old ways. Ajarn Sala Boon Khong is currently having many of his Burmese Yant designs copied from the original grimoires by an artist friend because the grimoires are delicate. Hopefully, these will be completed by the time the book goes to print but you know how artists are, they take their time. The Yants include the original Suea Jet Pod, many styles of Yaksa and tattoos that are made up only of Akhara, which is typical of the Burmese style.



158. A Wicha book of Burmese style Sak Yant belonging to Ajarn Sala Boon Khong.



159. Ajarn Daeng is a busy man, but always makes time for everyone.
Of note here is his Khan Kru to the top right of the photograph.

The Development of Sak Yant - an interview with Ajarn Daeng

Ajarn Daeng began the study of Sak Yant as a novice monk, and has been applying these magical tattoos for well over 20 years. Sak Yant at that time were all done by hand with the rod, the machine was not in use, and everybody followed the original tradition. The rod then was made from brass or stainless steel, and the makers often attached the sharpened tip of an umbrella and turned it into the needle for the tattooing. Hypodermic needles could also be attached to the rod in the same way, which made a fine point to apply the designs. Ajarn made his first tattoo gun himself, using a small motor, but if people saw that now they might be terrified (*laughter*). Back then, everyone had a 'make do' attitude, and people used any way they could to be able to apply Sak Yant.

The first inks Ajarn used were from China, the kind that was an ink stick that had to be ground by hand, which many people use for calligraphy and then hand-made oils were added. The Wahn plant oils also included things like the gall bladders from different animals, depending on the attribute needed, and other items such as Leklai, all dictated by the Wicha for the Yant. A Yant for Kong Grapan would have Phet Noi, Phet Dam, Phet Glap and Sabu Luat in the oil, all well known herbal additives for this attribute mixed into the ink. If it was a Metta Yant, Jan Khaw, Jan Daeng, Jan Hom and Saneah Jan herbs, 100 Jan, Wahn Kai Daeng and Wahn Sow Long would be mixed in. All these are Wahn for Saneah, and are also great for any Metta Maha Niyom tattoo as well. Besides adding the attributes, the Wahn also contain herbal drugs to both help the tattoo heal and stop any infections occurring. A type of Leklai called Pek is essential for Kong Grapan Yants, which is a famous additive in the Lanna lands. The alchemy of the inks, and the variety of inks used then was greater than today. Depending on the Ajarn in question, it is always good to ask before commencing the application of a Yant if there are additions to the ink, because the correct additives add power to a Yant.

Traditionally, there are only two colours for Yant tattoos, red and black and that cannot change (the oil Yants are not coloured). The red tattoos were for Metta, Maha Niyom, Chok Laap, Maha Saneah and the black ink was for Klaew Klaat and Kong Grapan Yants. The black ink then usually had more Wahn and ingredients, because the additives did not change the colour, but there was a limit to what could be put into the red ink varieties. Ajarn is sure that at some point someone will start adding more colours, but he disagrees with that as it disrespects the tradition.

When Ajarn began his studies, the tattoos were mostly done in a Wat, because all the people who applied Sak Yant at that time could only study the script at the temple. Only the people who had ordained as a monk could become a Sak Yant Master, and it was only when those people left the temple that devotees could go and see him as an Ajarn. Most of the people at that time got tattooed in the Wat, but the Wicha for some Yants dictated that they

had to be applied in other locations, and the Ajarns filled that demand. The most famous example of this is the original Lanna Yant, the Suea Jet Pod. In this case, Pod means bits or pieces, so the meaning of the Yants name is the Tiger with seven parts, and each piece had to be tattooed in a different location. It is a famous and powerful Yant, the Wicha for which has been distilled as it travelled to the different regions. One of the sites for applying one of the parts of the Suea Jet Pod was the graveyard, and the cemetery is also useful when applying various styles Yants on the skin. The reason to do it in the graveyard, or where they burn the bodies, is that the Ajarn gets the help from the spirits in the area to make the tattoo very strong. This practice is now unfortunately rare to see.

Ajarn Daeng has spent a lifetime collecting the Wicha for Sak Yant from many old Ajarns, monks and Wicha books. One time, Ajarn Daeng even found the Wicha for a Sak Yant on the walls of a cave! The Mae Um is a Yant that shows a person covering their private parts, and it can be adapted to hold any attribute, but it is low magic that can only be tattooed on the legs. There is only one rule for this Yant, and that is that it cannot be stepped on or it loses its power.

Astrology is also part of the tradition of Sak Yant. In the Northern Thai beliefs, some days that are very bad concerning receiving a tattoo are known as bloody days (*Chok Luat*), meaning that it is a day where the devotee will bleed a lot. These are days where it is best not to give a tattoo for Kong Grapan or Maha Ut, but these days Ajarn rarely refuses to do them. He does try and persuade a devotee to get something else on that day without telling them why so as not to disappoint them. It is the Thai way to try to please people.

The traditional Sak Yant was originally only known to Thai people, but as Ajarn has tattooed thousands of people, many of them told their friends, and Ajarn Daeng is now a famous Master of the art. Some of these friends then slowly found friends from abroad, and foreigners started to come to the Samnak for Sak Yant. With the modern technology of the internet and social media, Sak Yant has become more international, and foreigners are starting to travel to Thailand to get real Sak Yant. Only today, someone inquired about a Yant from the UK, which is astonishing to Ajarn when sat in his Samnak in Chiang Mai.

Foreigners now know more about Sak Yant from various books, and usually, come with an idea of what they want, but Ajarn recommends that the first Yants are Puttakun Yants like the Phra Chao Ha Phra Ong (5 Gods) or Na Mo Phutta Ya, Yants made from the Buddhist scriptures. These are Yants that lift up the fortunes to improve the life and are a better place to start than say a Tiger or Hanuman tattoo, which only gives power instead of a good foundation. Don't choose the symbol because of its beauty as some tattoos are powerful and they can bring chaos to life if the devotee does not know



160. During one of our many chats, Ajarn pulled out all the different Wicha for Yants to Mae Surasatee.



161. Sak Yant Master, Ajarn Daeng. He exemplifies Metta.

how to follow the rules of these Yants. The first tattoo should not be a lust or sex tattoo either as they can be too strong, and please do not put any scripture tattoos below the waist as they are high magic. Not following these rules can lead to problems. Many people who come to see Ajarn later tell him that their Sak Yant has improved their life. Some people change to a better direction in life, get a better job and find a loyal lover. Sometimes Ajarn Daeng also tattoos monks, and the monks then get more followers, enabling them to raise more donations to build a temple, which brings the local community together. Ajarn has tattooed for a few decades now and sees the effect of Sak Yant as being very positive.

Over his time applying Sak Yant, Ajarn Daeng has seen many changes in the art. People's opinion of Sak Yant has developed, becoming more widely accepted by Thai society, open to every class of people, as well as all genders. Before it was only for men, but now many ladies come for a Sak Yant tattoo, which has been made easier due to the greater number of Ajarns, because monks cannot tattoo a lady; it is against his precepts. There has also been a change in the technology regarding the equipment used and the modernisation of the imagery has made it more appealing to modern tastes. New Ajarns now try to sell their design skills, but they sometimes get the script wrong due to having copied something that was also wrong. For example, Ajarn recently saw a Cat Tattoo with a Tiger Kata, which is wrong, it goes against the rules and can cause problems for the bearer. Changing the imagery is fine as long as you understand the Wicha of Sak Yant correctly, what can work and what does not. Some new Ajarns proclaim themselves to be Sak Yant Masters a little too quickly, and with the boom in Yant tourism, they can become famous without having the correct knowledge of the Wicha involved. Unfortunately, this is especially true in South Thailand.

Even though the image has been modernised, the Wicha, the script and the kata are still original, and the given attributes as effective as they have always been. It doesn't matter how beautiful the image is if the script and the kata are wrong, that makes it merely a fashion tattoo, and that is disappointing because the person will not receive the benefits that are possible through Sak Yant. Ajarn Daeng has also seen foreigners now proclaiming themselves to be Sak Yant Ajarns or even Masters, but these people don't truly understand the art.

As for the changes in the future, Ajarn believes that the imagery will continue to be adapted and in some cases, hark back to a more ancient style again, possibly splitting the development of the art. He also believes that many people will start to claim to be an Ajarn falsely. So for the final words of this interview, Ajarn Daeng reminds people that it is the responsibility of the person who wants to have a Sak Yant to do the research, find the best maker and get what they want. In this way, they can be the proud bearer of a true Sak Yant!

Thank you to Ajarn Daeng for his advice, and passing on his knowledge of the art of Sak Yant tattooing. Ajarn is highly respected in this region because he exudes Metta, and is the Ajarn of choice when fellow Ajarns want to have some Sak Yant. With being a Lanna Ajarn, he is also concerned that the Lanna script and language may become lost with modernity and gives his time freely to teach others, to keep this knowledge alive.

As a final word on the subject, Ajarn Daeng asked for his rules of conduct to be reproduced in this book as they are only written in Thai in his Samnak in Chiang Mai.

Do not eat the meat of a dog or a snake, the food from an altar or left over food from someone else

(The latter part of the first rule is very difficult to keep).

Do not walk under clothes lines, under the stairs or steps and do not go under banana trees.

Do not disrespect Parents or Ajarns.

Please keep the five precepts, especially the third precept concerning not having an affair.

Please say kata every day. If your Yants have no kata, then say Namom Dtassa to The Buddha.

If any rules are broken, please return to the Samnak and make an offering of flowers, incense and candles to the altar and bathe in Sompoi to cleanse the Yants of defilement.

And as a final note, Ajarn Daeng will not apply Sak Yant to anyone who is drunk, unwashed or showing erratic behaviour. A person should always visit a Samnak in the same way as visiting a temple in Thailand.

The Yant on the back cover of this book was designed by Ajarn Daeng.



162. Mae Nang Phim now welcomes you to the section on amulets and statues.



161. A Yoni made from the skin of a Phi Tai Tang Glom.

Thai Occult Magic

Thai Amulets

Under the umbrella of Thai Buddhism, there is a significant difference between the principles of the religion and how it pertains to the people in each stratum of the society. The faith of the farmer can be seen as magico-animistic, while those among the elite who adhere to religion may be regarded as having organised an intellectual appreciation of Buddhism. The mere inclusion of Buddhism within the rural magico-animistic view has meant that most folks are the members of several different religious systems at the same time ¹ without necessarily knowing it, which tends to be 'the Thai way'. The dualism of beliefs has led to a schism between those who strictly adhere to the great philosophy, and the more esoteric accretions that have become manifold over time with the non-Buddhist practices coming from ancient beliefs ². It can be presumed that the indigenous beliefs of the Thais must have been Animist, a system that prevailed until the moment that Buddhism and Brahmanism came from the West, but survives in many of the magical practices undertaken in this land. As with many societies, each incoming influence tends to overlay the ancient ones, but rarely ever entirely removes them.

'It must not be forgotten that to the vast majority of the Siamese peasants, Buddhism is, and always has been what can be called 'The Decoration of Life', and the people themselves have remained animists at heart.'³

The Thai people are pragmatic, and will use any Buddhist or magical means to get through the difficulties of life. From the early documentation of the story of Khun Chang, Khun Paen (The classic folk tale in Thailand) it is often stated throughout the story that the people seek protection against threats to ward off sorrowful hardship, and achieve peaceful content ⁴. They look for someone to depend on, who will feed and support them while also taking care of their safety. When the main protagonist of the story, Khun Paen comes under attack, he exclaims, 'How can I protect myself?' and goes off to acquire his magical sword, a horse, and a spirit familiar for the tasks at hand.

The demand for protection is a dominant theme in the story, and that there are three sources of danger - natural, human wickedness and through authority ⁵. In the story, they seek to combat all sources of risk with skills and devices, including divination to locate future threats and avoid them. They adorn themselves with protective talismans, and recite formulas that have the supernatural power to avert weapons, repeal wild animals, and the malicious intentions of enemies. The story denotes the use of substances that defy the laws of nature such as Leklai, powdered clays that have been sacralised by mantra, oils from a corpse, potent herbs, and other materials from the dead ⁶. Some of these methods originated in India, but have been adapted over the centuries. The roots go back to the Vedas, the great texts of Hinduism, with the 4th text being particularly relevant as it is an inventory

of the threats to man, and how to resist them. The methods include natural substances with supernatural powers, recited formulas, and devices that can be constructed, which is the same as in the story of Khun Chang, Khun Paen 7. It is interesting that the primary role of Buddhist monks in the story is to provide services of divination and protection and to teach those skills 8.

In the Siamese tradition, the methods of Athan (supernaturalism, from the 4th text Atharva Veda 9), the idea of self-mastery, and the belief in spirits have become closely intertwined. As in many parts of the world, the belief exists here that the presence of spirits and deities determines processes in the natural world. In modern Thailand, the complex practices that influence hidden forces in nature are called Saiyasart, derived possibly from the Sanskrit word Sayasastra, 10 meaning dark science, or from the Khmer word meaning excellence or expertise 11. It has to be noted that this word is only used twice in the story of Khun Chang, Khun Paen and only in the more modern versions of the story, so it may be a more contemporary word than is presumed. From all the interviews that are in this book, it appears that everyone has a different version of what Saiyasart practices involve, and what one may consider 'dark', another does not. Reading between the lines, what seems to constitute a 'good' Ajarn (as in a good person, pure of heart and intent) has got nothing to do with the actual practices undertaken, but his position within those practices. There may be two Ajarns who construct the same rite to acquire the legendary substance Nam Man Prai from a corpse, and yet one may be considered as a black magician, and the other may not 12. Many Thais are comfortable with this ambiguity as it grants freedom to their practices, and often, the process of so-called Buddhist rituals employ the same methods as what some see as Saiyasart practices 13.

Initially, one of the primary devices for protection of the physical self from harm or bad fortune was through the Sak Yant tattoo, the history of which disappears into the mists of time. During the reign of King Taksin of Thonburi (1767-1782) there was still a Krom Wichakan, a Department of Knowledge, among whose duties was looking after texts on warfare, and distributing charms and formulas for invulnerability to soldiers 14. Yantra played a vital and central role, either as cast spells, invocations for objects, or inked into the skin.

The amulet is the lineal descendant and modern equivalent of Yantra 15. Like Yantra, they are carried for protection, attraction, winning love, and gaining favour, but in the legend of Khun Paen, they are not mentioned at all in their modern form. The modern amulet seems to have developed from votive tablets, with the added attraction of being as portable as a Takrut, and this is when the contemporary amulet is considered to have started. In the mid 19th century, Somdej Tho described how to make a charm using powerful materials, following strict rules, and to activate it through ritual, but only if made by an adept with acquired supernatural powers 16.

Over the 19th century, amulets became popular amongst the elite, but it wasn't until the 20th century that they were being produced in all regions of



162. A Hoon Payon constructed from bone in a disco style.
From the hands of Ajarn Korn.

the country. With the slow modernisation of Thailand, and the spreading of income, the people of the smaller towns could now acquire an amulet, and with the coming of roads, it was possible for people to travel to see famous monks and collect their items. Through this, the amulet trade began, and it is said to account for many billions of baht for the economy.

Two other periods helped popularise the amulet throughout the country. The first was with the advent of World War 2, when people sought protection from any source available, and then in the 1970's and 80's, officialdom got involved in sponsoring amulets from the famous monks, producing many thousands 17.

Amulets have slowly become THE protective device, supplanting Sak Yant, formulas, and other traditional methods although it must be said that in recent years the popularity of Sak Yant has exploded throughout the region. The Sak Yant tattoo has recently lost some of its social status as only being for the violent underclass of Thai society, and the bearers were often looked down on. This led to the practice where should a person wish to acquire the magic of these tattoos without the accompanying negative perceptions, many adepts chose to make them using a sacred oil as they are more difficult to see. The interest of non-Thais in this art has undoubtedly helped in this respect, and long may it do so as it is one of the finest traditional tattoo systems in the world. It is an amulet in the skin and should be taken seriously as that, and a maker of renown sought out because they can bring beneficial changes to life.

With Sak Yant originating as a protective device for soldiers, warriors, the royalty and boxers, the magic tends to be towards physical protection and authority, and some aspects of their attributes are still best acquired through these tattoos rather than with an amulet or statue. The advantage amulets have is that they are easily worn, and the bearer can 'rent' (amulets are always considered to be rented rather than owned) many types depending on what help they require in life at that time. Some of the most popular monks became avidly collected, and the amulet also then became an art form, with each maker expressing themselves through their designs as well as with the attributes that they bestow.

References

1. Edmund R Leach - *Pulleyar and the Lord Buddha* p84.
2. Berend Jan Terwiel - *Monks and Magic* p5
3. Reginald Le May - *The culture of South-East Asia* p163
4. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p923
5. C Baker - *Protection and Power in Siam* p215
6. p225
7. p228
8. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p924

9. The Royal Institute of Thailand insists on a connection between the word Athan, which they define as "Rites following Saiyasart manuals to create auspiciousness and protect against danger, or to cause danger to others . . . recondite power believed to cause effects." and the name of the 4th Veda in Indian literature.
10. J.TMcDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* p109
11. C Baker - *Protection and Power in Siam* p230
12. A long interview with the helper of a famous Ajarn.
13. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk* p111
14. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p55
15. C Baker - *Protection and Power in Siam* p232
16. p233
17. p236



165. An old Rahu Galaa from the collection of Santiago Barela.

The Attributes of Thai Magic

Wearing an amulet fulfils the desire to access magic to help with the everyday needs in life, and is a means of transferring an adepts power to their devotees. Wearing a Prai amulet is seen as a more direct way to get these things, but the path is a little rockier. These items are considered to be Saiyasart occult items and used for nefarious or malicious purposes, but Saiyasart is not an exclusive or firm category 1. There is a dizzying number of opinions as to what Saiyasart denotes in Thailand. Some people interviewed considered it dangerous, some irrational, some necessary for protection, and some the sole reason why Thailand was never colonised! Some see it as a skill only to be used by advanced monks (good) or for aggressive (bad) ends. Some see it as practical, and at times necessary to get through difficult periods. Some biographers have even described the practices of one of Thailand's most revered monks, Somdej Tho as Saiyasart, but only in the form of protective magic, and he did not use it to attack others or be aggressive. Perhaps it is not a case of being good or bad, but of being effective or not 2.

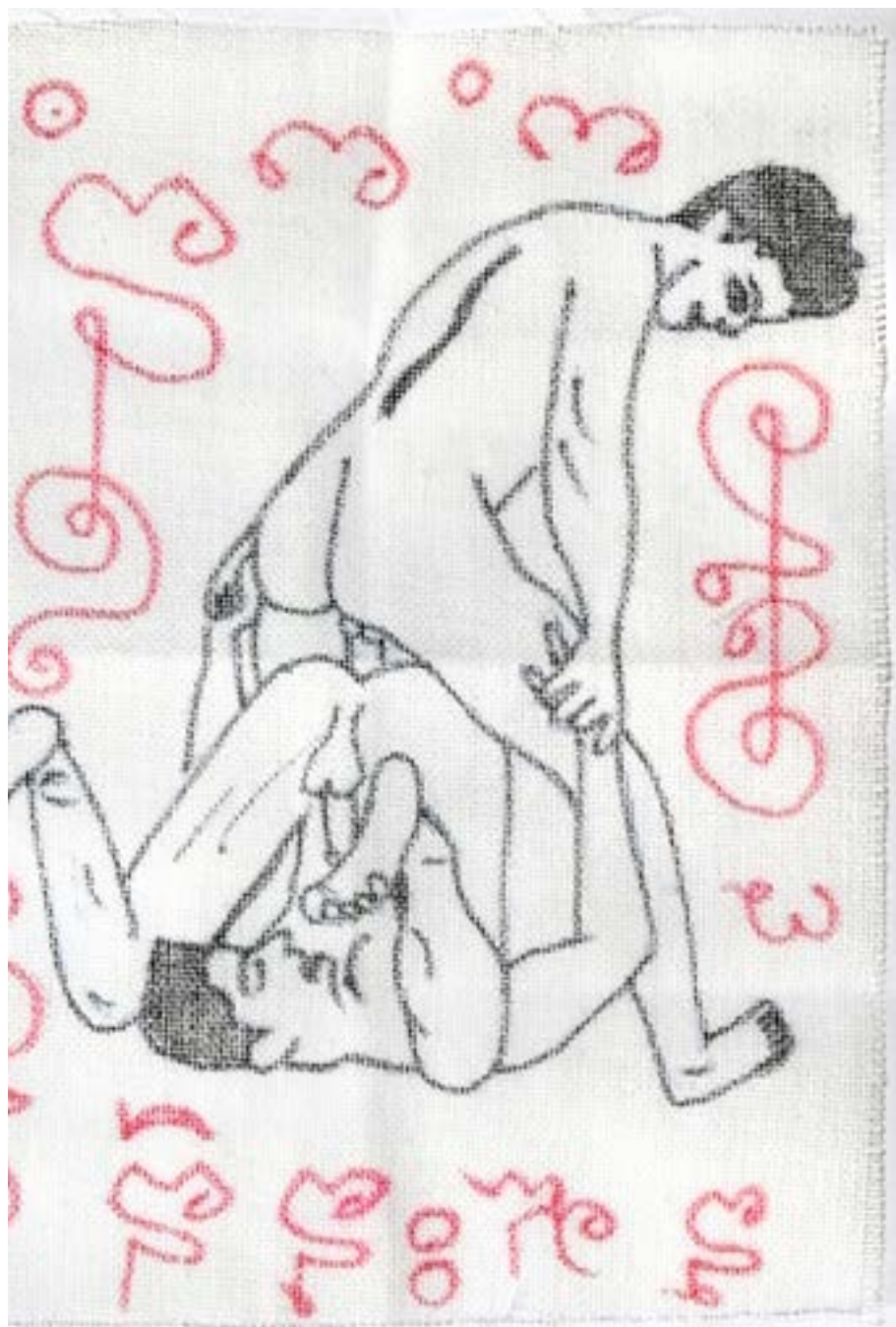
In interviews with two famous Ajarns, both stressed the same points concerning the best actions when wearing Saiyasart talismans. Firstly, always follow the path of correct actions to gain merit, and secondly, install Metta (kindness) into life. Both of the Ajarns in question display these traits, and have had the mastery of the self that is necessary to follow the path of Saiyasart. They consider that Prai items offer a quicker, and more efficient way to attaining the goals of life, but that the devotee must take more care to stay 'on the path'. It is well known to aficionados of this art that some have a form of 'crash' (a sudden drop in good fortune) in their lives because of not sticking to the rules, focussing solely on the advantages that these items can bring. Oddly, this can end up helping them become more knowledgeable of themselves, and through that, attain a better existence; it is part of the journey for many 3. As with Somdej Tho, although he used incantations, holy water, mantras and the like, Somdej Tho never claimed to be a magician, he was only a man who was attempting to find the path to enlightenment 4.

Most Thai people look for some sort of help to cope with life and get ahead - to find a job, a lover, a partner, get money, be protected, attract kindness, gain wealth, and the Thai system offers this through amulets. Makers still advertise the qualities of newly made talismans with advanced press releases to the shops and magazines that usually list the supernatural ingredients of the charm, the methods of the magic used, the date they were consecrated (where relevant), whether other makers were involved with the process, the name of the person that was the source of any Prai materials present, and even the way they died! The attributes held within each amulet will also be listed to aid the people to decide whether that talisman is what they need in their lives.

Maha Saneah - The granting of Maha Saneah is the most popular attribute because it is the quality of attraction. Maha Saneah is effective at work



166. Now that's Saneah folks!



167. And Saneah can be for everyone.
A great hand drawn Pha Yant by Ajarn Poosex.

with attracting friends and finding sex or a partner. Almost all modern amulets offer an element of Saneah, and the quality is gleaned from the use of herbs, specific soils from various spiritually active regions (7 graveyards for example), certain woods, Prai materials, and even things like centipedes, because they have a strong enchantment. The use of these materials is then enchanted with the necessary spells to boost the power of the attribute itself.

The ultimate Maha Saneah items would be both Panneng (front skull piece amulets) and the legendary oil, Nam Man Prai corpse oil. These are the top occult items in Thailand, and all the people interviewed have recommended them, but neither should be taken lightly. The bearer should feel a good Maha Saneah item envelop them, which can be a little odd at first.

It has to be noted here that the Thai makers believe that it is up to the bearer to work out how to use the quality of Maha Saneah that is bestowed by the amulet they wear, and with that process, they grow as people ⁵. These items are not 'Abracadabra' in nature; they do not suddenly make you famous, they offer an advantage that the bearer must grow into and use.

Love magic is the most popular form of enchantment, be it to find a new lover or binding a lover to them. This is especially true for Thai women, because even though polygamy is now outlawed, large numbers of Thai men have a 'minor wife'. Of note to male visitors who use the sex services available in Thailand is that prostitutes often use powerful magic in the absence of respectability to win a man's heart ⁶.

Metta - This is a beautiful evocation that encourages those close to express kindness. What is truly astonishing is that Metta means 'Mother's Eyes' in Thai (Meh - Mother, Taa - Eyes) and everyone knows how kind the eyes of a mother can be.

Maha Niyom - This is the quality of popularity, to help those close feel at ease in the presence of the bearer of the amulets made with this quality. A similar idea is with the attribute of Metta Maha Niyom, which is the effect of loving-kindness bestowing popularity.

Chok Laap - The attribute to bring wealth and good fortune, whereas the very similar Maha Laap means great fortune. These amulets attract riches, but again, the bearer still has to work to attain them. The amulets offering Chok Laap are considered able to bring opportunities, but these opportunities must be spotted and worked upon, and one must also consider what is great fortune? Happiness? Enough to eat? People often mistake great fortune as winning the lottery. If only it was that easy.

Maha Amnat - The bestowing of great charismatic power, which instils fear in others, and grants authority. Uncommon in an amulet (Khun Paen, Rahu and Lersi have elements of Maha Amnat), but not with Sak Yant, which has many forms of this attribute as it is essential in times of war.

Kong Grapan - The bestowing of physical invincibility, an attribute again more associated with Sak Yant but also occurs in amulets, with Khun Paen being the best example.

Klaew Klaat - Freedom from all things that harm - accidents, gossip, malicious intent and it helps the bearer avoid danger.

Maha Ut - Invincibility, impenetrability and protection. The magical substance, Lek Lai often has qualities of Maha Ut due to its nature, which can flow and be able to move, even though it is a solid substance. A good Lek Lai can flow to form a barrier to stop bullets and knives, but a volunteer is needed to test this. Anyone?

Khaa Khaay - Good selling power, and the ability to secure business deals.

Serm Baramee - The attribute to raise a persons prestige.

Serm Duang - The attribute to realign or refresh the fate of a person to be of greater benefit.

Nang Niew - impenetrable skin.

Within the practices of The Thai Occult is a massive range of styles of amulets that can be changed to appeal to the tastes of each generation or recently, with the opening of new markets. The biggest change to hit the Thai market in recent times is from the rising demand for magical constructs from mainland China, drastically changing both the imagery used, and the type of talisman made. Of some concern, is that fact that recently, the Buddhist organisation has issued guidelines to restrict monks from making amulets due to the over-commercialisation of some Wats, with Wat Bang Phra being a prime example. There is also an active movement from the conservative elements within Thai society to clamp down on the use of human materials in The Thai Occult, so this is a period where the makers will either have to become very smart with the way they present their works or change their methods when producing magical items. The opening of new markets in The West will help this process and protect the art itself.

Let's now look at some of the amulet types by firstly using edited passages from the first book on The Thai Occult (the red cover) and then seek the help of some knowledgeable Ajarns for their opinions. There is a critical process involved here. Over the past ten years, the knowledge of this style of magic is perceived by many makers to have become confused, and in many cases, wrong. It has been surprising how many Ajarns have been eager to be interviewed, to put the record straight in a printed form that everyone can read. As the world of The Thai Occult opened to outsiders and foreigners started to visit the Ajarns, the knowledge that those people carried away with them either became twisted through incorrect translations, or through extreme marketing techniques. Everyone is guilty of this process, which has also been noticed during the writing of this book, but.

with the best translator and the help of the Ajarns interviewed, this book will constitute a better appraisal of this system than has been available before. The problems with translation generally come from the cultural references that are an inherent part of the language so by choosing my partner, Bon, to translate, he could spend the time necessary to get as close as possible to what the Ajarns were trying to pass on.

Now is time to quote the Ajarns and to give them their system back. It is they that are the source of both the knowledge and the magic, not the sellers, and it is the Ajarns that deserve to be recognised as the remarkable people they are. At the same time, it is important that they also become available to visitors to Thailand, and then together, to fans of magic, devotees and Luksit's alike, the Ajarns can be in the position that they deserve to be.

As most of the Ajarns in this book are Lanna magicians, there are bound to be regional differences in ideas, but the important thing is that the knowledge is referenced. This work is not trying to dominate any beliefs held by others, merely offering the words of knowledgeable people on an ancient system of magic that is yet to be fully understood by the outside world.

To the Ajarns in this book, thank you.

Jenx

1. J.T McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* p109
2. p111
3. An interview with Ajarn Maha Metta January 2016
4. J.T McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* p110
5. An interview with a successful seller in Bangkok, February, 2016.
6. Watson & Ellen - *Understanding Witchcraft and Sorcery in SE Asia* p35

The Lersi

Before the interviews with the Ajarns, this is an edited version of the original text concerning the Lersi from the first book in The Thai Occult series to show the progress in the understanding of this deity. There is great interest in the Lersi in the West, but as yet, little information from the Ajarns has been passed on, which this section hopes to correct.

The Lersi (also known as Ruesi and the names are interchangeable) hermit tradition is pre-Buddhist and is closely related to the Rishi of India. A Lersi is a hermit sage that follows the natural law, wanders the forests and lives a simple but magical life close to nature. For historical context, a Lersi reputedly visited the parents of The Buddha when he was born, and the Buddha himself sought out a Lersi for advice on his path to enlightenment. The Lersi are traditionally represented as men of advanced age, with long hair in a top knot, a long beard and as wearing a tiger skin. They are usually depicted as aged and bent men, carrying walking sticks and wearing the traditional mala beads. In Thailand, the most common types of Lersi depicted in statues and amulets are that of a seated man with the head of a tiger or cow or as an aged man with the distinctive hat of the Lersi.

The Lersi will traditionally spend their time meditating to develop their psychic powers and collecting magical herbs, minerals and other substances. These they use to make love charms and protective amulets to pass on to their devotees. They wish to help other beings to be happier in life and do this by telling fortunes, performing rituals, casting spells to reduce bad karma, chasing away evil influences and spirits, offer protection from enemies, or even increase one's luck and wealth with a spell. Many Lersi wear a tiger skin or reddish brown robe, whereas others don white, and devote themselves exclusively to the healing arts. This kind of Ruesi follows Phor Chiwok, named after the Rishi Chivaka who was the official doctor of the Lord Buddha. A Chiwok Ruesi would collect herbs, minerals and healing substances to make potions, and could be compared to the druid bards in Western mythology. A Chiwok Ruesi will also be expert in orthopaedic massage and other matters, such as Astrology. ¹

When the Buddha was on his ascetic path to enlightenment, a Lersi taught him how to meditate and also taught him the natural way of magic, something The Buddha later rejected due to what he considered to be an impure relationship with the pursuit of Nirvana. The Buddha realised that the magical practices were not going to lead him to enlightenment with the purity He perceived as being possible, only to higher realms of existence and the abilities related to acquiring a favourable rebirth, clairvoyance, manipulation of the elements, the power to command, healing and mastery of the environment. His understanding of what He was seeking was the genius of Lord Buddha, who rejected the use of the powers that can be attained through some Buddhist practices as a distraction to a pure life. It has to be noted here though that in Thailand, all the top monks are graced with, and adored due to their magical powers, which brings a duality to their



168. The Lersi shrine outside the Samnak of Ajarn Tui, which he built by hand.



169. An astonishing Pujow Samingprai by Ajarn Suea.
Carved from a Teak tree that grew on top of a termite mound.

knowledge and a schism in the Thai way. Some consider that the accumulation of what can be termed magic or even their making of amulets as not strictly Buddhist, whereas others will see it as helping their devotees. As with most contentious issues in Thailand, everyone seems to have their own opinion.

Another translation of the name Lersi would be 'seer', and an analogy can be drawn with the wizard in Western mythologies. He represents the mysterious, secretive hermit who lives a solitary existence, dwelling in caves, the forest or on remote mountains. He can see the realms that ordinary human beings cannot perceive, such as the three times (the past, the present and the future), and he has special abilities attributed to his mastery of the natural lore. The Lersi represents knowledge, and the acquirement of that through studious intelligence, and can reputedly remember their past lives. In the Thai pantheon, there are 108 Lersi, but only a handful are well known, and praised as individual deities, a list of which follows. ²

Phor Gae

Phor Gae is the top Lersi who could cause fire when he opened his third eye, relating him directly to Shiva and Hinduism as the source of all Lersi. Phor Gae is the Lersi that transmits all knowledge to the world, and he is the one who is often channelled by the Sak Yant Masters during the initiation of disciples and for some, with the blessing of the tattoo (the Pruk Saek). Some renowned Sak Yant Masters such as Ajarn Toy in Bangkok, perform the task of giving a Sak Yant possessed by Phor Gae, and with his eyes covered by a mask of this Lersi. The mask renders the Master blind, which is seen as proof by his devotees of his abilities, and to see the transformation of Ajarn Toy into Lersi Phor Gae is something to behold. There are few examples of channelled magic in Thailand, where the practitioner is possessed rather than the magic produced within, generated as a result of prolonged meditative practices. ³

Chiwok

Chiwok is the Lersi that is dressed in white and is the Lersi for healing, being the doctor of The Buddha himself. He holds the knowledge of the herbs and natural medicine, and his statues are said to contain the power to heal. In Thailand, a statue of Chiwok is often to be seen in Thai orthopaedic massage establishments, but generally, only the reputable ones that offer healing services, rather than the ones that provide a 'happy ending'.

The Animal Headed Lersi

The animal-headed Lersi arose from devoted Lersi who, through high levels of Samathi attained the ability to change their head into any animal of their choice. The legend is that together, the Lersi with this ability were trying to impress each other by transforming in turn until tricked to stay in that form. The most common of these types to be seen in Thailand is the Tiger face Lersi (Pujow Samingprai), followed by the deer, the bull, the monkey and

most rarely, the Naga headed Lersi (The Naga is a mythical dragon or serpent-like creature associated with the story of the Buddha attaining enlightenment, also known in Thailand as Phaya Nak).

The Tiger faced Lersi is the one that controls spirits and witchcraft. He is the one sought for help in relation to all necromancy and Barang, giving his devotees protection from all evil spirits and black magic, as well as keeping the ghosts and spirits in line. Pujow Samingprai grants authority in these matters, and it is common for anyone worshipping or working with the spirits to have the Tiger-face Lersi on the top layer on their shrine. Pujow Samingprai is depicted as carrying a book or a skull in his left hand, which symbolises his knowledge and control of the spirits. Besides his proficiency with all things related to dealing with the dead, many also praise him as a teacher, asking for guidance and as a conduit to attain success in all aspects of life. Most of the Ajarns visited during the making of this book either has a public shrine to Lersi, or he acts as a significant part of their altar.

The Nine Face Lersi

In the past few years, quite a few of the old guru monks have made statues and amulets invoking the nine face Lersi, with the most recent and exceptional example being from Luang Phor Nong. Before his death at the grand age of 93, this spritely monk brought together some of the remaining monks of his generation to collectively produce an astonishing range of items. In the outline for this work in one of the Thai amulets magazines, it reported that the difficulty in making a nine face Lersi is the fact that the realms that have to be accessed are so far from the human realm that the mind can get stuck, unable to return. Luang Phor Nong was a monk for most of his life with astonishing abilities, and this marked the zenith of his spiritual production. After a full and long life filled with great vigour, Luang Phor Nong was ill just for a few days before he passed away in 2015 4.

From the same article on this production, it listed who the 9 faces represent:-

- 1 . *Lersi Parotmuni or Phor Gae* is the sagely secretary/scribe who's purpose is to transmit knowledge to the world and is therefore the Lersi that is channelled the most often devotees who *Khong Khun* (go into trance).
2. *Lersi Narot* is a musical Deva who's purpose is to grant success through Maha Saneah, Maha Metta and Maha Niyom.
3. *Lersi Narai* is the great wizard. Practitioners in every esoteric field must respect him, not only in the field of magic or traditional medicine. His purpose is to grant influence, and the authority necessary to perform their duties and services.
4. *Lersi Tafai* is another powerful ascetic. Lersi Tafai has the strongest supernatural powers, and his advice is sought with rituals. His purpose is to.

inspire Wicha practitioners, those who follow the way of magical knowledge.

5. *Lersi Tawa* Having achieved success in the field of alchemy, his purpose is to help others in this field, and he is called upon when producing Samlit, the metal that contains both gold, silver and copper that is often used in the finest amulets and statues.

6. *Phra Lersi Ped Chalugan* or Bull-head Lersi has vast supernatural powers and knowledge. This Lersi is believed to be the first incarnation of Phra Narai or Vishnu. His purpose is to grant supernatural power and high influence onto devotees. He brings with him Metta for all humankind.

7. *Lersi Pujowsamingprai* or Tiger-face Lersi. This Lersi is an expert in the suppression and subduing of enemies, and who's purpose is to lead and govern followers. Very good for authority over the spirit realm, and is regarded as the controller of all the spirits and ghosts, making him an often essential and common addition to the shrines of Ajarns.

8. *Lersi Promma Paramit*. His supernatural powers are on par with the rest of the Lersi but he also possesses Metta, despite being fierce, and speaking with a booming voice. He is the Lersi for Brahma, often depicted with four green faces and eight arms, and his purpose is for granting influence.

9. *Lersi Chiwok* The great physician who took care of Lord Buddha during his time on earth. He is a Master of natural medicine and he grants health, and hence, he is seen in all the reputable establishments for therapeutic massage.

The modern Lersi

In Thailand, Lersi Tafai Akhadamo is considered to be the last of the 'true' Lersi, and he passed away in 2005. He is considered to be the last Lersi because of the difficulty of the lifestyle expected of them, as not many people would spend decades as a hermit in the jungles and caves. Another difficulty in following the old way is that a person wanting to be a true Lersi cannot now find a Lersi to train them correctly as none remain. Many people are claiming to be part of Lersi Tafai Akhadamo's lineage, but none have followed what is seen as the correct Lersi path in the way he did.

The life of the Venerable Tafai Akhadamo is a fascinating story. He trained as a medical doctor, but he also acquired vast knowledge of the ancient herbal medicine of the region, although he ended up as a brigand for many years during a tumultuous time in Thailand's history. At the age of 40, he sought out a more spiritual path and became a student of Ajarn Thongdam, living with his Master to study his ways, which included seeking out Leklai in the most dangerous and hidden caves. After some time together, it was Ajarn Thongdam who suggested that he wanted to perform the ritual required to help him become a Lersi and as the time spent with his Master enchanted him, he readily accepted.

This ritual was prepared following the strict rules of this ancient style of life. He could not cut his hair for three years and had to cease eating meat or blood for seven years before the actual initiation as, without this required purity, there is reputedly a risk of insanity from the ceremony. At the same time, he also had to adhere to 8 precepts:-

1 - Not to kill or cause injury to other beings.

2 - Not to take possession of anything that has not been given.

3 - To refrain from all sexual practices including masturbation and even kissing.

4 - Not to lie, speak ill of anyone, be vain in speech or swear.

5 - No intoxicants, even coffee but medicines are allowed.

6 - No solid food after noon but in cases of severe hunger, sweet liquids are allowed.

7 - No entertainment such as films, TV or music and no adornment of the body for attraction.

8 - Do not sit above a noble or a senior in spiritual terms.

The initiation ceremony finally took place in the wild regions between Loie and Uttaradit in Northern Thailand, and the spirit of a Lersi manifested itself physically and asked what was required of him, eventually entering Lersi Tafai to take up residence within him. The spirit of the Lersi was said to be visible for over an hour, which is extraordinary as he usually would offer just a few words via being channelled while in a trance. The ceremony was reported to have lasted for three days and nights, which must have been an ordeal. Lersi Tafai was then inhabited by this Lersi, who is a Deva that acts as an intermediary between the world of men and the realm of the gods. Lersi Tafai then went to reside in the thick jungle and only rarely appeared amongst humans, when he would share his blessings. Towards the end of his life, fearing that his failing health would no longer allow him to live alone in the jungle, he established a Wat and spent his final years at peace 5.

While this traditional role and path of the Lersi are now no longer possible due to the modernisation of Thailand, there are still many famous Lersi here, but according to numerous interviews with sellers and collectors of talismans, they can now no longer find the solitude necessary for the truly natural path. Few would say that this diminishes their role or abilities and it is too easy to state that the Lersi is no longer a force to be reckoned with as many now following the new Lersi path. All over the world, traditional magical roles have changed by modernity, but their lore and nature can still be kept by some and passed down their lineage. Notable modern Lersi includes Lersi Sompit and Lersi Petmune, and there are stories and legends of ancient Lersi that appear sporadically in a few parts of the country. This old path seems to be changing, and with these changes, there is a rise in those becoming a Lersi.

1 Wikipedia entrance for the Ruesi.

2. www.lersi.net, a website that has influenced all writing on the Lersi tradition

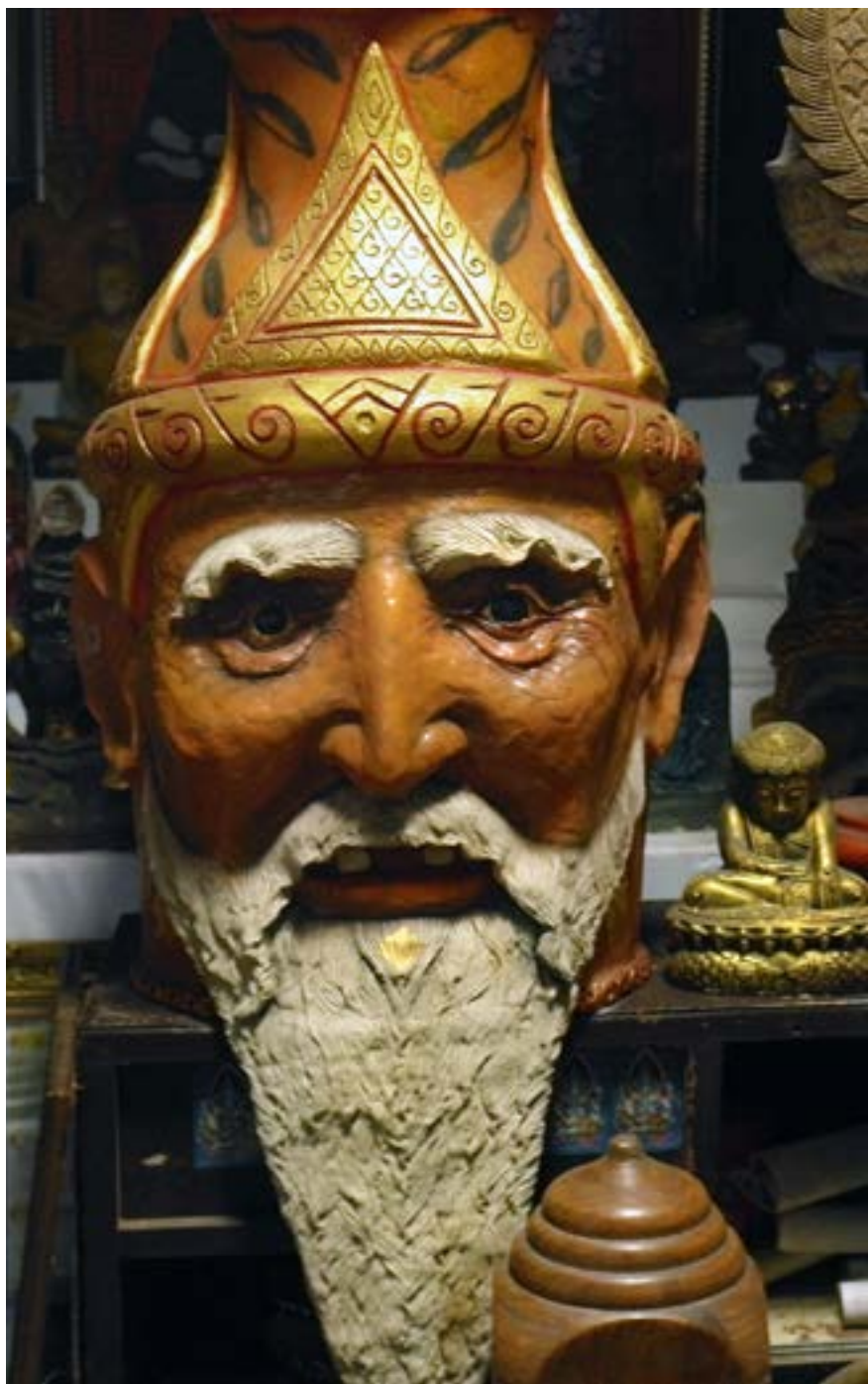
3. Joe Cummings - *The Sacred Tattoos of Thailand* p164

4. Suksit Magazine December 2015

5. www.lersi.net



170. A fabulous bronze to Lersi Ped Chalugan from Wat Bang Phra.



171. A mask to Phor Gae.

The Lersi - an Interview with Ajarn Nahn Khong

(The names Ruesi, Rishi and Lersi are all used for the same deity)

The history of the Lersi dates back to the period before the birth of the Buddha, and originates from Brahman beliefs. The Buddha was a disciple of a Lersi as part of his journey towards enlightenment, at which point, many Lersi became a disciple of the Buddha, which is a natural part of the constant flux within spiritual practices. The Lersi hold similar principles to many of the great religions in that they want to follow a life of happiness and goodness. They are renowned for solitary practices in the jungles and caves of this region, and are depicted as the wandering hermit. There has been an intermingling of the traditions of Buddhism and the methods of the Lersi, as once Brahmanism was well established in India, the knowledge spread with these wandering ascetics, bringing it to the region as a whole, not just Thailand.

There are Lersi that are mentioned in both legend and history, Lersi Narot, Lersi Tafai and Lersi Narai; many, many Lersi but we say that there are 108 although that number just means a lot, it is not a specific amount regarding the Lersi. Each Lersi has mastered a different knowledge regarding the attributes, such as Chok Laap or Kong Grapan, and they can be requested to help an Ajarn when working with that attribute. Each of them also has specific skills which can be called upon, Lersi Tafai is usually praised for helping get rid of evil spirits, and Pujow Samingprai has the magical power to control the lower spirits, he has authority over them, represented as Maha Amnat. Most Lersi amulets do not usually have Prai, because they use the power of the Lersi rather than the power of the Prai. The ingredients of a Lersi amulet are often sourced from profoundly spiritual places; certain mountains and caves, and they use specific Muan Sarn.

In many Samnaks, you will see representations of the Lersi as a statue or mask, and they can be considered the great teachers or Kruba Ajarns of ancient history. The Lersi can be called upon when help is needed with many aspects of Thai magic, including the giving of Sak Yant, the making of amulets, and even rituals. In Thai culture. A case in point is that when starting to make a new movie or an actor begins a role, there will be a ceremony where a Lersi mask will be used in a blessing (a Korb Sian ceremony) to help and protect the people involved.

Many Ajarns become a monk as part of their early training, which is not necessary, but in the Lanna culture, to become an Ajarn and have the respect of others, being a monk at some point is essential. Ajarn Nahn Khong was a monk for an extended period, and studied Pali in University. His whole period of being a monk had a structured education with specific practices that help build knowledge and Samathi. All magical and spiritual roles in Thailand are blessed with having great teachers, and there is an in-depth knowledge associated with them that takes a lifetime to learn. Being a monk is the best practice to follow to prepare us to be an Ajarn as the practice of Buddhism is an integral part of Thai magic, whatever the region. It brings

balance to the magical system as the light is always there to combat the dark, and Buddhism gives the Ajarns an opportunity to help devotees in every possible way.

The practices of the Lersi have changed over the millennia, and now some lineages of Lersi can marry, and the method appears to have become more commercial. Some of the doctrines of the Lersi have been lost, and the journey to becoming a Lersi is not as strict, or as principled as it was in the past. Ajarn Nahn Khong considers that the modern Lersi are self-proclaimed, and they dress up as a Lersi, claiming to have great magical power, but in fact, they live like an average person, and never practice what is necessary to gain the ability to bestow magic. There are few that practice in solitude as they should, and the knowledge seems lost. To Ajarn Nahn Khong, it all smacks of a scam.

Everybody has to make their own mind up regarding this issue, and decide whether the Lersi they meet are genuine.

It has to be noted here that two Lersi were interviewed for this book but neither interview can be printed because they were not worth reading. The Lersi in question may have felt threatened by the questions posed, but they were questions that most people who read this book could answer without any problem.

The Lersi - An Interview with Ajarn Khaw

The Lersi were the disciples of Phra Shiva who now live in the higher realms, and as we cannot contact the higher gods directly, we use the Lersi as a conduit. The Lersi have a special magic, and can teach good meditation, so every Master believes deeply in the Lersi. The Lersi have two names, Phor Gae and Lersi but here, Phor Gae means all Lersi, not just the one Lersi. Some Masters say Phor Gae, some Phor Lersi, and they are referring to the same thing.

There are over 100 Lersi, but the top Lersi are Lersi Tafai, Lersi Naa Hua (Bull Head), Lersi Pujow Samingprai, Lersi Narot, Lersi Narai, Lersi Phetchalukan and Phor Chiwok. On Ajarn Khaw's altar are statues to Lersi Tafai, Lersi Naa Hua and Lersi Pujow Samingprai, because they are the ones he is close to, the ones he believes in, the ones who bring power to his work like an electricity line from the gods. Some Ajarns worship the same Lersi as Ajarn Khaw and some worship others, it all depends on their perception, and their magical lineage.

The first magic Ajarn studied for the Lersi was for Lersi Tafai, but it depends on the Master and experience as to which Lersi each Ajarn or devotee feels an attachment. Each has a different Wicha, and each Lersi will help if you believe and have the right Wicha. They are used in a similar way to our Masters who have passed away; the Lersi are energy to draw upon, to be invited to come to help with any blessing or ritual.



172. Lersi Kasem of Bangkok.



173. Lersi Kasem's Lersi-mobile.

It is not necessary to believe in all the Lersi; one is enough. If a devotee wears a Lersi amulet, they can gain the good things from the Lersi, but they have to believe with all their heart, and follow the correct path. Most Lersi charms do not have Prai, but it is OK if you have Prai with the Lersi, if a person likes Prai, it is fine as it is just a source of power. Generally, though, Lersi amulets contain only sacred materials. An old Lersi Tafai amulet that Ajarn wears has Leklai and Lek Nam Phi, both substances which have a resident deity. A Master will use any holy material like a stone from a strongly spiritual place, from sacred sites like Wats, from caves and mountains, and the Muan Sarn also has to be special for Lersi. Even if it is the same Muan Sarn that you see in other amulets, with these plants they must also come from the holy place. Everything has to be very special.

Ajarn Khaw has made a Lersi Samingprai that has a Luk Om in the back, which is a ball of special Muan Sarn (please see photograph 174 below). The amulet itself though is made from a blessed powder (*Pong*), which, when wet, an Ajarn uses to write magic and then delete it, over and over again. So it has been used in many rituals, and for a lot of magic, making it special enough for use in constructing a Lersi amulet. Lersi Pujow Samingprai and Lersi Tafai are the most potent protection from spirits and black magic. Each Lersi has a different character of magic to offer or drawn upon, and there are many kata for each Lersi. The study of the Lersi is very time consuming, and we must be truly dedicated to the Lersi to achieve our goals.

174. A Pujow Samingprai talisman by Ajarn Khaw



Khun Paen

(Khun was an honorific title equivalent to Baronet, but today is used as Mr or Mrs for polite discourse with friends and guests)

The epic story of Khun Chang/Khun Paen is the outstanding work of literature in the Thai language, a folk epic combining the social panorama of a novel with the grand storytelling of an ancient saga. It was originally developed in the oral tradition as a fast-paced tale of romance, tragedy and farce spiced with sex, warring, adventure and the supernatural. The story was written down, adapted and extended at the 19th century Siamese court with two kings amongst the authors, but in effect, there are many versions of the story ¹. The Thai linguist, William Gedney believed that “if all other information on traditional Thai culture were to be lost, the whole complex could be reconstructed from this marvellous text”.

The story of Khun Paen can be considered to be the Thai ‘Lord of the Rings’, full of magic, mystery and intrigue, and it influences Thai storytelling to this day, as can be seen on any Thai TV soap opera. Many of the soaps have a spiritual and magical bent with women and men trying to outdo each other in any way possible, including the use of black magic to capture the person of their desire and get on in the world. They can be quite wonderfully barmy.

There is an incredible new translation of the tale from the authors Chris Baker, a Cambridge University lecturer and Pasuk Phongpaichit, a Professor of economics at the prestigious Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. This section of the book will quote from their work liberally as it serves as the best and often only source for a range of Thai magical traditions that survive today due to the total loss of most historical documents after the sacking of Ayuthaya by the Burmese in 1765. It also has to be remembered that many of the magical practices of this region are passed on orally, or with Wicha books that can deteriorate within a lifetime due to the climate.

It is believed that the tale of Khun Paen is based on actual events in around the year 1500, but that the story absorbed several other tales and stories as well as any natural embellishment that occurs through the constant retelling of this classic fable. All Thai school children study this story as part of their education, but it is usually from a sanitised, state-sanctioned version and some of the content here has come as a surprise to Thai friends. The powers that be do not tend to promote stories of baby roasting, spirit familiars and the casting of spells to the general populace, but as you will see, the story provides a historical context to this book that is invaluable.

The story itself is a classic love triangle that ends in tragedy. Khun Paen (dashing but poor) and Khun Chang (rich but ugly) compete for the lovely Wanthong from childhood for over fifty years. Their contest involves two wars, several abductions, a suspected revolt, an idyllic sojourn in the forest, two court cases, trial by ordeal, jail, and betrayal. Ultimately the King condemns Wanthong to death for failing to choose between the two men and causing so much trouble. It is fast paced and stuffed full of heroism,



175. A fabulous Khun Paen bucha by Ajarn Subin.



176. Khun Paen roasting his baby.



177. A coloured and carved Panneng to Khun Paen.

romance, sex, violence, rude comedy, magic, horror and passages of lyrical beauty (again, modern Thai TV soap operas!). The story is so universally known here that it is a source of songs, popular sayings, and common metaphors, but it is the magical content that this book is going to reproduce from this excellent newly translated source. The book itself by Professor Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit is highly recommended, and the extended version is well worth the extra effort, all 1,500 plus pages of it.

Khun Paen - The Master Sorcerer

Khun Paen was surrounded by war, magic and soldiers from a young age, growing up as the son of a valiant soldier in violent times. After his father died in battle, Khun Paen begged his mother to allow him to 'gain the knowledge' ² to follow in his father's footsteps, and he was sent to the abbot of Wat Som Yai to begin his studies. These studies included reading, writing, numerical skills, religious and ethical teaching, astrology, the military arts, and mastery of supernatural practices through yantra and other devices. It has to be noted here that up to the late 1700's there was still a Department of Knowledge in the Thai government, among whose duties was looking after texts on warfare, and distributing charms and formulas for invulnerability to soldiers. The magical path seems to have been an integral part of the martial way for the Siamese, as it is considered here that many battles are won before the fight, not just during the campaign itself.

At the temple, he was to be taught the 'inner ways', meaning skills in tapping the exceptional forces that are believed to be latent in the individual, using various methods including meditation, kata and knowledge of yantra. The 'Inner ways' is a phrase that nicely captures the depth of knowledge, its arcane origins, and its reliance on the talents of the practitioner. These skills stem from a tradition of asceticism and self-mastery embedded within Thai Buddhism that has then been passed to its martial and classical arts. Khun Paen learned quickly, and was eventually taught everything the abbot knew until he was sent to Wat Palelai to continue with a higher Master of the inner ways. Khun Paen was taught how to make a sword for war, a buffalo charm (against black magic attack), how to enchant 'dummy soldiers', the raising of spirits, invulnerability, invisibility and illusions, and how to charm a woman so that once their eyes met, she would never forget him ³.

In parts of the text, it is easy to glean his abilities.

He scattered rice mixed with the bones of the dead, ensuring that all in the house were overcome with drowsiness, and fell asleep instantly. ⁴

In the forest there will be no one to rely on, only my spirits and spirit dummies. ⁵

The spirit dummy here was referred to as Hun Phi, some material moulded into human shape, and then enchanted so that a spirit resides in it, effectively bringing it to life. Later in the story, Khun Paen creates armies of such figures from grass.

He cut grass, tied it into 1,000 dummies, scattered enchanted rice and the dummies came to life as people.

These are accepted to be a variety of Hoon Payon; an ancient animist spirit protection figure still made using similar techniques today in the more rural parts of the country. Khun Paen created hundreds of these for a battle with terrifying effect, and it seems that the armies of each side used to wield supernatural forces in the pursuit of victory.

Dummy attacked dummy, stabbing and parrying, clashing pike against pike, wrestling hand to hand in uproar.

One of the most incredible sections of the story comes when Khun Paen decides to arm himself with all he will need to win.

I'll forge a sword, buy a horse and find a spirit son to give me the expertise and knowledge to overcome my enemies.

In Thai folklore, Khun Paen is credited as the inventor of the Kuman Thong, the 'golden child', a spirit type that is legendary for both its power, and connection to his bearer. ⁶

The reading of this tale is vital for an understanding of the history of the Thai Occult, because this is the first reference to the making of a Kuman Thong in all Thai literature. Kuman is from the Sanskrit *Kumar*, which means son or Prince and *Thong* is gold, so the Kuman Thong is a golden spirit son. These spirit sons are derived from a child that died before or during birth, but the most powerful of these are the spirits of infants that died in their mother's womb, along with the mother. These are believed to be especially potent, perhaps because they not only contained the energy of the life not lived with the child, but added to this is the protective energy of the mother. This ghost is classified as a Phi Tai Tang Glom, one of the most potent supernatural forces in Thai magic. Another famous form of these child spirits is a Luk Krok, a stillborn baby, small, and not fully developed. This is dried and kept as a powerful protective charm, to be nurtured and enchanted so it will love, and hence protect its Master. Both of these types can be astonishingly violent and powerful spirits, reputedly capable of killing people.

In the old version of the story, to acquire his spirit son, Khun Paen found a suitable graveyard, cordoned it off using blessed thread (*Sai Sin*) and raised the spirits within to create an army, cutting the tongues from each of them to be assured of sublimation (and also a quieter life). In return for their obedience, he promised to praise and feed them, to give them a taste of the life they missed, and they rallied to him! ⁷ He then found the grave he was searching for, dug up the corpse and cut the spirit of a child from the womb of a woman who died while pregnant, and her ghost failed in the attempt to stop Khun Paen. The older versions of the story are more ghoulish, and they fully express Khun Paen's power to control the spirits of the dead, especially this violently powerful and potentially malicious Phi Tai Tang Glom ghost.



178. Ajarn Apichai, the Lanna Khun Paen.



179. Ajarn Apichai blessing his Khun Paen Prai amulets in the graveyard; seeking the help of the spirits present to make the amulet strong and effective.

These types of ghost can be recruited and directed by adepts with the right skills, such as Khun Paen, who can use them to deliver messages and serve as soldiers or assassins.

In one of the newer versions of the story, Khun Paen is shown to be utterly ruthless in his desire for a spirit son, and the power it will bring, because he kills his concubine, Phim and cuts his son from her pregnant belly! ⁸ He then took his dead son to within temple grounds so his mother's vengeful spirit could not enter, and affect the process. The recitation of learned, powerful kata was used to achieve his will, but he did not follow the modern practice of instilling the Kuman Thong into a figure or amulet. Instead, he created a spirit familiar from the carcass of a baby, bound to him by magic. First, Khun Paen constructed a ritual area with posts of armour wood in the four directions, a ceiling of white cloth with inscribed Yantra and seven circles of sacred thread. He then used holy woods to build a fire, and grilled the body evenly, finishing the rite before dawn and then applying lacquer and gold leaf. The application of lacquer was an old practice carried out on corpses to make them less disgusting to the living. This action disguises any of the rapid decomposition that occurs in the tropics, as was the application of gold. ⁹

There are constant references to magical practice in the tale, with another version of the story of Khun Paen saying that he had a Panneng. A Panneng is an amulet or altarpiece that uses the third eye region of the skull, and is one of the most powerful tools within the magical arts of Thailand. There's no mention of how he acquired it or whether he made it, but it can be taken as confirmation that the art was practised at that time. In fact, in the book, there are a few references to the use of Panneng, and this suggests that it was a common ancient practice. ¹⁰

...a belt made by digging up the corpse of someone who died a violent death, sawing the skull into strips, weaving the strips into a belt with a checkered pattern and inscribing Yantra.

... awesome looking spirit-skull belts, bandeaux infused with power.

The best reference to the use of Panneng was to create a type of vest or chest armour of pieces of skull, woven together using the hair of the corpses they came from. (Which sounds amazing!)

Khun Paen Makes A Sword

The legend of Khun Paen provides an early reference to how the Thai people made magically powerful swords. The procedure for creating Khun Paen's sword is still mirrored today in the method for producing a Miit Mhor, an adept's knife, which would be made from metal from various sources, fired with auspicious woods and Yant inscribed blades. ¹¹ (A Miit Mhor is used in Thai magical and spiritual practice to channel energy, bless, exorcise and empower other ritual objects. ¹²)



180. The modern day Miit Mhor still follows many of the metallurgical rules from the time of Khun Paen.

The metals used in the sword came from the peak of a stupa, a palace and a gateway, the metal of a coffin ornament, metal used in a Wat, which could be a hinge or nail, metal from various old weapons and the metals used to cast a Buddha, which is generally a mixture of gold, iron, copper, bronze and silver. The final addition would have been a substance called Lek Lai, that can be a naturally occurring metal-like compound that is believed to convey invincibility, and this substance still holds a mystical status in Thailand. Lek Lai possesses both life and spirit, and can even be used as an insert into the body to protect from both spiritual and physical attack. Many modern-day Ajarns have Lek Lai inserted into their flesh for this very same purpose.

In all, the sword for Khun Paen would be doused and beaten seven times, and inaugurated on an auspicious day, usually at around midday when the sun is at its highest point. The handle was inscribed with the Buddhist wheel of the law, and finally, the hair of a fierce spirit was sealed into it. In the story, when he raised the sword the sky grew dark, rain fell, and thunder rumbled; so he named the sword, *Skystorm* ¹³.

In the Siamese tradition, the methods of protective magic, the idea of mastery, and the belief in spirits have become closely intertwined. Knowledge of oneself gives the adept the ability to control spirits, and activate natural forces using a repertoire of formulas, unusual substances, and other devices ¹⁴. In the making of his sword, Khun Paen draws on all three of these techniques, and instils the weapon with exceptional power.

It should be noted that initially, Khun Paen received his training from abbots who had no sense of the modern idea of the incompatibility of their ways with the strict tenets of Buddhism. At that time, it was considered that they both followed the 'natural way'. These magical practices seem to have always been part of the Thai Buddhist way, even after the reforms of later kings and the changes by the Sangha, (the Thai Buddhist governing body) and these practices are still to be found to this day ¹⁵. Monks still carry out rites that are not strictly part of Buddhism, and the forest monks are often accredited with supernatural powers through a life of asceticism and dedication to kata ¹⁶. Devotees are drawn to these monks, and associate themselves with these remarkable people to have their abilities influence their lives in the pursuit of happiness, love and success.

The Modern Worship of Khun Paen

Despite the fact that in modern Thailand, Khun Paen is viewed with suspicion for his cruelty and womanising ways, he still holds the position of a national male deity to the point where he is placed on a higher level on an altar, above the ghosts and spirits. He is traditionally regarded as an example of manhood, a bold, daring warrior, a womaniser, and a mystic with a following of female admirers and protective spirits. The makers of amulets and statues use the deity of Khun Paen as a source of magic to bestow certain qualities on his followers:-

To naturally attract the opposite sex, rather than through force.

According to Ajarn Apichai, there is a significant perception problem with this ability, in that people think it will give them power, and an excuse for inappropriate behaviour. Ajarn asks why would you want a slave rather than a willing participant? And why would someone want to be with you if you behave in this manner? (Except for some of the more esoteric sexual practices). What the attributes of a Khun Paen talisman do give is an advantage that you can then grow into, and develop within the confines of the magic available. As mentioned many times in conversations, wearing a Khun Paen talisman is a chance for you to grow as a person, not an excuse for bad or arrogant behaviour.

To influence those present to like, trust, respect, and admire the bearer.

Develop an indestructible confidence, bolstering courage in all aspects of life.

Makes it easier for people to grant favours, and give help.

Helps gain the upper hand in business or career.

Attracts luck, and bestows charm.

Gives victories in all aspects of life.

Strong protection from all harm.

These are all aspects of life that the devotees of the Thai magic want to boost within themselves, which is why Khun Paen is such a popular deity. His amulets can be classified into two major types according to the way they look. There is a mainstream Khun Paen, where he is shown on his own, very much looking like a Buddha and the Kuman Thong Khun Paen. The mainstream type is usually made with herbs, natural earth soils and incantation spells, whereas the second type is made using cemetery soils and corpse materials.

Very often the question arises as to whether a Khun Paen amulet is suitable for members of the opposite sex to use as a talisman, and the answer is entirely yes¹⁷. There is no restriction for women if they choose to wear a Khun Paen amulet. It works for both male and female, because the essence of Khun Paen is about bestowing a charming ability to its owner, along with its protective power.

It has been stated by the makers and sellers that Khun Paen amulets never do any harm to its owner, but instead increases the good fortunes in the daily life of the worshipper, although the owner must share the merits accrued from performing good deeds. With many good amulets, becoming involved in vice activities is thought to weaken an amulet's efficiency, but not a Khun

Paen, as he promotes a wild but controlled behaviour. The limit to this behaviour would be where the devotee creates bad karma, which will generate suffering, no matter how expensive or strong the amulets in question may be. In the West, it is considered that magic and the occult is a matter of power, which can lead to all sorts of problems as the thought that we are powerful is terrible for the ego, and this can affect behaviour. What is important with all aspects of the Thai Occult is to gain the Samathi required to understand our actions, and to use the magic in a balanced way.

It is quite common to find an image of a Kuman Thong on a Khun Paen amulet, where a baby Kuman is seen to be lying below Khun Paen. It can also be depicted with two Kuman Thong at each side with hands clasped in reverence of Khun Paen. A famous example of this type was made by Luang Phor Timm of Wat Lahanrai, who was dubbed "The King of Khun Paen" due to the power of his amulets. Luang Phor Timm ascribed this power to the sacred components within the amulets that contained powdered bone from an unborn baby (known as Prai Kuman) and soils from 7 cemeteries. Luang Phor Timm's Khun Paen amulets are the earliest ones of note, but it can be presumed that the practice of making these amulets predates this Master.

Luang Phor Timm is the most famous maker of Khun Paen amulets (he passed away in 1975), and his are some of the most expensive charms to be found in Thailand, which has lead to umpteen versions of suspicious origin. In 1971, Luang Phor was informed that it was a particularly auspicious year to produce efficacious amulets, and he set about searching for the right ingredients. LP Timm needed a baby that had died with its mother on a Tuesday, and was going to be cremated on a Saturday, as this would be the best source of the Prai element to power the amulet. He would then need a ritual performed that involved a special Pha Yant (magic cloth drawn by LP Timm), special Kata and a Miit Mhor to break bonds, and affix new links to the spirit of the dead child.

A temple helper managed to find a deceased lady that fulfilled these criteria, and the family was approached for permission to use their relative for magic. In these cases, the family will worry that when a lady dies when pregnant there is a good chance that the spirit will turn into a vicious ghost, and be unable to rest in peace. By offering the corpse to LP Timm to be used for his ritual, they hoped that the beneficial karma gained from using her body in this way (to benefit others) would aid their relative into a better rebirth. Once permission was granted, the temple helper removed the corpse of the child from the mother using the instructions from LP Timm, and as he was carrying the body back to Luang Phor, he could hear the ghost of the mother demanding the return of her child. LP Timm performed rituals for many days and nights in the main hall of Wat Lahanrai, and when finished, he asked his helper to go and bake the corpse and later, to grind the skull into a powder. It is these powders that made his Prai Kuman Khun Paen amulets so strong. The author has held some real LP Timm amulets and can attest to their potency, they are incredible (but so is the price).

A disciple once asked LP Timm why he chose to use the skull of a dead child in this process. He answered, 'When we plant a tree, we want to eat the fruits quickly, so it is best to use good soil and to give the tree everything it needs to grow. It is similar to wearing an amulet. We want the charm to provide merit, and bring protection to our lives, so it needs to be made in the best way. The Prai Kuman Khun Paen amulet will provide merit from Lord Buddha, but the intense power and protection will come from the Prai Kuman" 18.

In recent years, there have been many Khun Paen amulets produced that display a sexual element, which have been incredibly popular. Often they show the consorts of Khun Paen as nude females surrounding him, or even indulging in various wild sexual acts. This style of Khun Paen amulet has the sole purpose of generating Maha Saneah, or opposite sex attraction for the worshipper. An amulet of this type is for the Casanova ideal that some men desire (Khun Paen is often called The Thai Casanova, and men with many ladies are likened to Khun Paen) and the amulet will be blessed with specific spells and potent ingredients, to benefit the owner in achieving his desire for love, sex and affection.

In modern Thailand, Khun Paen is perceived as a hero, and a national figure who's ideal can be drawn upon in times of national unrest. The worshippers of Khun Paen do not necessarily worship him because of who he was and what he stands for, but because of the attributes that his amulets and statues bestow. The characteristics of Maha Saneah and Metta Niyom are the most popular attributes to acquire to aid life, and Khun Paen acts as one of the best sources of these attributes.

An Interview with Ajarn Apichai - The Lanna Khun Paen

One of the many Lanna magical formulas to make a Khun Paen is that first, Ajarn Apichai has to collect soil from a graveyard as well as ashes, as many ashes as he is allowed to take after requesting the permission of the guardian spirits of the graveyard. The correct kata must also be recited throughout the process of collection, and great care has to be taken to choose what to take, and where it should come from in the cemetery. With the Wahn content, he uses many of the Wahn Saneah Jan (special herbal mixtures and there are many of these used in the Thai system), that offer Maha Saneah, Maha Niyom and Chok Laap, and as the combinations of these mixtures affect the outcome, they can be balanced in many ways. Added to this mixture is a powder that comes from making a particular type of Yant. Ajarn would write a Yant, and then thoroughly erase it to get the powder for the mix. During the whole process, there have to be astrological calculations to find the best time and day to both make these mixtures, as well as when assembling them before moulding the amulet itself.

It is when moulding the mixture that Ajarn has to chant the kata that places the 32 parts of the body into the amulet to construct the new spirit body within (if it is a Prai Khun Paen). There are two opportunities to Pruk Saek a Khun Paen, the first gives power to the basic mixture, and the second is performed when adding the Prai to the mix. Adding the Prai element is useful for Saneah, but if it is a Khun Paen without Prai, that amulet is better for Kong Krapan (although all Khun Paen's do have an element of both attributes whether Prai is present or not). When Prai is present, to follow the Lanna Wicha the bone must come from three sources; a male source, a female source and a child source. Having three bones sources results in the fact that there are three ways to access wishes from the Khun Paen, which significantly expands its usage. If wishing for wealth and fortune, seek the Kuman Thong within the amulet with your mind, and make the wish. When wishing for lovers, the devotee has to pray to the female Prai element to have that wish fulfilled, and If wishing for Saneah or Kong Grapan, pray to Khun Paen directly through the male spirit. It is possible to Pruk Saek a Khun Paen amulet anywhere, but where Prai is present in the amulet, performing it in a graveyard is best, because the spirits present support Ajarn Apichai in the task of consecration. The correct procedures bring the best possible outcome with the finished product.

There are many recipes for a Khun Paen and all of the ingredients add power to the amulet, although the spell still has to be for Khun Paen. Here is an example of the contents of one Khun Paen amulet that was released by Ajarn Apichai.

1. Waan Maha Saneah 108 (a mixture of many different plant sources that add attraction)
 2. Ground old amulets.
 3. Saneah Yaa Faet - a powder that helps attract, and control prospective lovers.
 4. Dirt from 9 graves, 9 Temples, 9 markets, the four corners of the lands, and 9 rice fields.
 5. Bone ash from four Phi Tai Hong ghosts, two male, and two pregnant females.
 6. A mix of ground bone powders given to Ajarn by a Master of Lanna magic.
 7. Waan oils that include Waan Sow Long oil, Waan Dok Thong oil, Waan Kai Daeng oil, and Waan Saneah Jang oil. Waan Kai Daeng oil is renowned for it's sex attraction, and it gives the red colour to any Nam Man Prai where it is part of the mixture. This oil is often described as the best for a Kama Sutra effect.
 8. A mixture of 9 generations of Nam Man Prai.
 9. Takrut Hua Jai Khun Paen Prai Kaew - the heart kata of Khun Paen.
- Much of Ajarn's Wicha for Khun Paen talismans came from Luang Phor Saneah of Wat Thian Khang and Ajarn speaks very warmly of the old monk, who is famous for his Saneah Wicha.

For ease, when a reference is from Chris Baker . Pamuk Phongpaichit - Khun Chang/Khun Paen - 2010 only a page number will be given.

1. xi
2. p55
3. p59
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17. An interview with Ajarn Verathep, August 12, 2015.
18. The amulet magazine Saksit, August, 2014.



181. The front and back of one of Ajarn Apichai's classic Khun Paen's, which has three bone sources, including a chip of Panneng.

The Kuman Thong

The word Kuman (from Kumar) comes from the Sanskrit to mean son or Prince ¹, while Thong comes from the Chinese for gold ². The earliest reference to Kuman Thong in Thai history is with the story of Khun Paen, a warrior who is reputed to have lived around the year 1500, and the folktale forms the style of storytelling that still pervades Thai culture today. In this incredible saga of magic, intrigue, war, love and betrayal, there are numerous descriptions of the magic of that time, making it the earliest historical reference for the Thai practices. The invention of the Kuman Thong or 'Golden Child' has been accordingly accredited to Khun Paen although it does state in the tale that he learned the knowledge to perform this task from the skilled adepts of the time ³, which suggests that the source of the Wicha is lost in the mists of time.

In the Thai magical system, there are a few types of child spirit that can be used as a powerful ally, and they mention the most powerful ones in the story of Khun Paen ⁴. The spirits of infants that die in the womb are believed to be magically potent, considered such because they contain all the energy of the life not lived. A child has no comprehension of the behaviour expected of it until it is taught, and these spirits can therefore be made into a devastating force. The magical lore can be said to adapt to the times in which they are used, and this story takes place during numerous wars and periods of social strife.

There are a few versions of the story that depict how Khun Paen made his Kuman Thong, some highly sanitised and some extremely raw. The tale has been rewritten many times, but in the most famous one by Prince Damrong, Khun Paen cordoned off a graveyard with blessed thread, and raised the ghost of a mother who had died while pregnant, cutting the spirit son from her belly ⁵. This type of ghost is technically known as a Phi Tai Tang Glom and is supernaturally potent because there is both the spirit of the child that is craving for life, and the ghost of the mother protecting it. After a long and terrifying battle in the graveyard, Khun Paen showed that he had the abilities to deal with this ghost, which in modern terms, ranks him as a high adept. While in that graveyard, he also persuaded hundreds of other spirits to follow him in exchange for adoration, and they rallied to his call!

Another version of the story by Khru Jaeng has Khun Paen murdering his consort, and cutting his son from her belly ⁶ (it's one hell of a story). He then roasted it over a fire to desiccate it, all the while chanting powerful mantra to bind the spirit to him. He may have also used any resulting oils, which is another astonishingly powerful necromantic tool, and then the tradition states that the baby, once dried and desiccated would be covered by a type of lacquer or beeswax before finally adding gold leaf ⁷. Adding gold to the face was an old practice to beautify the dead, making them less disgusting to the living, and it is one of the possible sources of the name 'golden child'. In the versions of the story, Khun Paen creates a Kuman Thong that either resulted in the death of the mother or came from a mother that died before

the child tasted life. The strength of character he would need to be able to cut out his own baby, or take the ghost of a dead baby from its spirit mother is beyond anything imaginable. From this procedure, Khun Paen acquired the most potent type of Kuman Thong, a spirit familiar that could kill, deliver messages, and deceive his enemies 8.

An idea of his relationship with his spirit familiar can be gathered from the story, who would either appear when called, or would whisper in his ear when not summoned but had something to pass on to his Master. He would even perform tasks:-

Goldchild entered the Palace and sat upon the King, immobilising him.
Baker - Khun Chang Khun Paen p661

Goldchild replied, I won't make him die, just so hurt and ashamed that blood flows from his eyes. p346

There are many instances in the tale where the Kuman Thong showed what he was capable of, suggesting that this was not like the modern Kuman Thong, where an effigy carries the ghost. Khun Paen's Kuman was a spirit that he could see and hear, and it had the capabilities to kill or bewitch his enemies, making it equivalent to a familiar in Western magical practices. There is no mention in the story of Khun Paen carrying his Kuman, so the body must have been kept elsewhere. The way of making his familiar by roasting it also seems closer to the way a Luk Krok is made rather than a Kuman Thong, but more on that in a later chapter.

Many Kuman Thong use the remains of children that died before birth without the mother's associated death, and this type constitutes the bulk of Kuman Thong amulets and statues made during modern times. A Kuman Thong of this type can still be a powerful necromantic ally, but they are generally more aligned towards bringing luck and wealth rather than any violent actions. The other kind of child spirit, the Luk Krok, differ in their nature. The Luk Krok is an enchanted spirit that builds a loving relationship with his bearer to become an entity that can be highly protective. They used to consist of an actual desiccated child or foetus that had been made into an amulet although nowadays, the maker would use Prai materials from a suitable corpse and place them in an effigy of a Luk Krok. Their nature is entirely different from a Kuman Thong, and therefore, the Wicha that created them should differ too.

Even though the practice of killing one's concubine and cutting out the body of your dead son and roasting the carcass, may have lost its allure to most modern people of right mind, it is thought that this still occurs in some rural areas, or remote parts of South East Asia. The spirit produced from this process is of such power that those adepts who follow the Saiyasart traditions of this region have been known to desire to attain familiars similar to that of Khun Paen. There can be a terrible price to pay with this path, although in the short term the practitioner may get everything he could have



182. THE classic, modern Kuman Thong were made at Wat Sam Ngam, near to Nakhon Pathom, where this 8 feet tall Kuman resides.



183. Luang Phor Yaem of Wat Sam Ngam died in 2017 at the grand old age of 102.
One of the fathers of the modern Kuman Thong.

hoped from the golden child. The belief of monks like Luang Phor Amnat about this path is that the rewards are excessive, but at some point, it all crashes down unless the adept adheres to a strict balance between what is given, and what the practitioner puts back into his 'karmic bank' through merit and good deeds. The problem is that often, power corrupts, and the warnings of others have no effect on those who turn to the black side. Luang Phor said that it takes a highly focussed person not to be pulled astray.

The aspects of a spell, and whether it can be said to be black or white magic can be defined in many ways, but in the opinion of most people interviewed, it depends on whether it does harm to the person in question, or whether it forces them to do something they do not want to do. In general, all the Maha Saneah (attraction) amulets are classed as white magic, because they give us an advantage that the individual can then act upon, they do not force the subject to conform to the will of others, they charm them. Charming magic differs from using a powerful necromantic oil to enslave someone, or using a Kuman Thong to attack a rival or enemy. It has been stressed strongly by the makers themselves that to use a strong Kuman Thong to attack others, and cause harm, is a path that should be avoided.

In the Thai beliefs, there are four different types of the Kuman Thong that can do serious harm to others, listed here out of interest.

Kuman Thong Pretsoon – This version of the spirit can travel and get into the minds of the subject who is being attacked, and can reputedly drive them insane.

Kuman Thong Pretdub – This is regarded as a cold-blooded killer that waits for its intended victim, and can slice open their throat as fast as any professional assassin. The adepts who can wield this Kuman Thong have to be assured of their own protective abilities due to the ferocity of this spirit.

Kuman Tong Pretkong – This type prefers to stay near its altar, but once disturbed can chase the victim anywhere, and is relentless. He is a wild black magic child that is difficult to subdue once enraged.

Kuman Thong Pretmun – This one only operates within its own sphere of influence, and is perfect for strong protection of the home or business.

Many stories have emerged of people unexpectedly dying while robbing a house, and some of the deaths have been associated with a resident Kuman Thong, gifting a salacious story to the eagerly superstitious media of Thailand.

No one is 100% sure whether these types of Kuman exist or whether they are a part of the lore of these necro kids, but the same classifications and types have been mentioned in interviews more than five times, suggesting that doubting them may be foolish. The same five people also spoke in a whisper when talking about them.

The vast majority of Kuman Thong do not conform with the vision of the makers of the above types. Instead, they are more interested in helping their followers and devotees have a better lot in life, rather than following a path of revenge or violence, which only leads to bad karma. The modern Kuman is designed to lift the fortunes of their owners, and come with a spirit which is entirely different from the dangerous versions mentioned above. The power for this type of Kuman comes from the desire for life from a spirit who lost its chance to live, and the Thai makers can use that power, and turn it to the advantage of the bearer of the item. The magic for these talismans comes from the Prai materials, which have to constitute some of the remains of a child. These remains predominantly consist of bone, but hair, fingernails, teeth, and body oils that are expelled during a ritual before cremation can also be used.

It would be wrong to imagine that there is a culture of baby stealing, and the roasting of them on a spit in Thailand, although some articles would certainly suggest otherwise. The quantities of these Prai materials needed to hold the spirit to the statue or amulet is small, but they are essential for the item to be of any use. Some makers have suggested that a Kuman Thong can be made without the presence of such materials, but some people are not convinced of that as there would be nothing present in the item that the spirit can bind to, and consider it as part of its body. Some have suggested that the presence of Prai materials is faked due to the difficulty in obtaining them, but that is not the case (unless the whole thing is a fake, which happens). The rural areas of Thailand have a higher mortality rate than the cities during pregnancies, and this is the same with the fetal remains from abortions or miscarriages. Many of the abortion clinics here are quite secretive and therefore, away from scrutiny, which serves to save the blushes of those who make a mistake amidst their sex life. Thailand has a high rate for teenage pregnancies, and the aborted remains would be invaluable to any maker of these items, should they be able to acquire them.

From the stories that come into the news feed in Thailand, it seems many makers have followers who work with the dead. For instance, there is an organisation here called the Por Teck Tung, a group of volunteers who collect the bodies of the dead from road accidents, suicides and murders. It is an act that is considered beneficial for a Buddhist to experience the frailty of life, and can be a part of their studies in the philosophy. Should the dead collected include suitable candidates for the work of a local Ajarn, there is a good chance that he would be informed, and then some Prai materials may be obtained at a later date. There is also one Ajarn who works at cremating bodies, and he gets the chance to make some of the best Nam Man Prai made today. Add to this the plethora of backstreet abortion places, and it is not difficult to perceive that the acquirement of suitable materials is possible, especially when you consider that most of the population is cremated. There is ample opportunity to acquire these items, and plenty of people who will either profit from it financially, or through their association with a monk or Ajarn. The government is presently trying to restrict access to these materials, an effort which is having some effect.



184. A fantastic Kuman Thong bronze from the monk, Luang Phor Sanit but with the new regulations regarding the posting of bucha, these are going to become rare.



185. This is an original Kuman Thong Duud Lok bucha from Luang Phor Pina, and he has followed the old way of construction. Inside is a piece of the correct child source, and then he has built a rough exterior from a mixture of earths. There are also Akhara inscribed in his hand into the Kuman, making this both powerful and very rare indeed.

Styles of Kuman Thong

The Kuman Thong is a popular talisman in Asia, and this presents to the makers a vast marketplace to test their magical and artistic prowess. There are chat sites dedicated to Kuman Thong, pages on Facebook and websites offering what they consider to be the best Kuman Thong available. Some of these get a little extreme with the marketing, as is the way in certain parts of Asia. In Singapore, there are websites that promise wins on the 4D lottery, with flashing headers proclaiming, Buy this Kuman Thong and win big!!!⁹ While being a little comical and a reflection of the gambling culture in certain parts of Asia, it also displays aspects of each culture's relationship to their spiritual and personal needs. China, Malaysia and Taiwan are also centres for the sale and promotion of Kuman Thong, and it seems that the further the distance from the source, some of the spiritual aspects of this ghost veneration are lost.

Each maker of Kuman Thong talismans uniquely expresses their art. Some Kuman Thong are produced in a raw but vital way, and these will tend to show what they are made from, what they contain. They may be encrusted with bone chips from a child, or simply made from a moulded mixture of earths and Prai materials. These earth mixes can vary between lineages, but the one used by one of the older and most famous makers, Luang Phor Yaem of Wat Sam Ngam is a benchmark for the art. His Kumans consist of the earth from 7 cemeteries, 7 Chedis, 7 salt licks, 7 sacred caves, 7 fields, 7 river mouths and the bones from 7 dead children¹⁰.

Other lineages use other magical sources such as the dust from burned incense at temples, earths from markets and crossroads, wood from trees that someone has hanged themselves on, a child's hair and oils, and a mothers tears. The list is probably endless and highly adaptable, depending on the item being constructed¹¹. Many Kuman are made to offer the bearer Maha Saneah, and contain herbs specifically for that purpose, while others are directed towards luck and gambling, and therefore, the mixture used will differ. There are a few ways to put the correct spirit within the talisman, either using the original spirit in the Prai materials, inviting the angel of a child into a spiritually active item, or creating a new spirit. The power of these talismans depends on the strength of the materials present, the abilities of the Ajarn, and the correct Wicha.

The making of a Kuman Thong is not just an ancient art; it is also a living art that continually seeks to expand the Wicha of making these items. All makers use magical mixtures, the secret of which has been passed down through the generations of their lineage. When bone or other Prai materials are present, it is a mark of the openness and raw honesty of some makers in not holding back from showing what these items are made from, with bone crumbs or chunks of skull often being visible.

An old image of the Kuman Thong that is less represented now is called 'Kuman Thong Duud Lok', and this shows the Kuman sucking on his intestines, in a cycle of consuming his magic, and growing continually stronger. The image is quite disturbing to most folk, but it is still produced in the mainly rural areas of the North and North East, and is considered to be a stronger version of the normal Kuman. Most people are freaked out by this image, and it tends to be only for those devotees who are genuinely into the magic of these items.

The modern way tends to be to hide both the contents, and the concept of the Kuman Thong behind a cute representation to make it more palatable to the general populace. Hence, there are images of smiling happy children, a kid carrying a money bag, a statue of a child at play, or even that of a baby wanting to be held. There is still something mildly creepy about them, but their happy demeanour distracts from any distaste that may arise from the necromantic practice of making them. Many devotees have reported that they still work in the same way, it is merely masking their true nature for the sake of the taste of the bearer.

Some of the great makers often carve Kuman Thong amulets by hand from spiritually active woods, such as Takien wood, the wood from the Jack Fruit tree, wood from an old temple that has absorbed spiritual energy from the devotions within or the Star Gooseberry tree to name but a few. The woods chosen have such a spiritual resonance that there is no need for Prai in these circumstances, as the wood holds enough power to carry the angel of a child by itself, invited there by the maker. Some of the strongest Kuman Thong are made solely from the bones of a child or youth, and these are highly valued, especially when it is a child's Panneng or forehead bone. These are very rare indeed, and command high prices from collectors.

Many Kuman Thong are also cast from various metals, which can include coffin nails, meteorite, metal from city gates and temples, old statues etc. These amulets can have powdered bone with an inserted Takrut, or just the Takrut itself, which is considered powerful enough to activate the talisman. The metals used can hold a strong spiritual charge, and the activation Takrut brings the attributes of Maha Saneah and Chok Laap, but these attributes can vary with the written spell chosen.

The statues and amulets rely on their appearance, the maker, their Wicha and their artistic abilities to attract the fans of Kuman Thong. Some of the designs are downright scary, expressing their power and this draws many as they can be associated with that power, and become part of it. Some show how their forces have been directed with one or both hands raised, beckoning in the same way as Nang Kwak or those electric cats that continuously wave to try to pull money to the owner by its actions. A few of the famous statues from highly respected makers use the image of fat and happy babies, and with one, the baby has fangs, and is holding a skull on a stick. One of the most amazing ones is encrusted in cemetery earths and bone chips, its power and influence radiating like heat from a fire.



186. A bronze Kuman encrusted with bone chips from Ajarn Verataep.



187. A Taep Doll from Ajarn Perm Rung.

The Taep Dolls

Ajarn Taep's new style of Kuman Thong exploded onto the scene a number of years ago and changed the way many of these items are made, because he hit the big time by making them acceptable to more people, expanding the market beyond its traditional limits. He invented the Luuk Taep (Angel Child) by putting a Kuman Thong angel into a doll that could be loved as a child, and not raise too many eyebrows when seen in public. In these dolls, there was just a Takrut and no Prai, and while many swear as to their power, it will be a gentler acting energy without the clout of Prai materials. These Taep dolls were bought by many Thai celebrities who then swore as to their effectiveness, which ensured Ajarn Taep's fame, and a steady stream of Bangkok's rich and famous to his Samnak in North Bangkok. According to a seller, the cost of the Taep dolls depended on the quality of the doll with the very realistic ones from the US commanding the highest prices, while Ajarn charged a set fee to activate them spiritually.

Ajarn Taep's dolls hold no Prai materials, and he assures everyone that he has placed a child's angel into them rather than a ghost. The angels are considered less powerful and more benign, which in itself has made them more palatable to the general public. Other makers have then turned around and used other dolls, but made them using Prai materials, leading to a great deal of confusion amongst people as to the nature of these items. During numerous interviews, both sides of the discussion have been stated with some sellers saying that no Prai is present, and others suggesting that it is impossible due to the nature of child ghosts, in that they need to be able to bond with something human that they recognise, or they will not stay in the doll.

Due to the explosion in popularity of the Taep dolls, one enterprising soul is now offering a babysitting service for them if their parents go on holiday, or are otherwise unable to care for the dolls and the occupying spirits. They go to the house to feed, praise and chat to the Taep dolls, so they do not get lonely and cause mischief.

The latest development in the popularity of these is occurring while this is being typed in early 2016. On TV today (Channel 3) was a computer teaching company, whose owner has Taep Dolls, and he is offering courses in computer programming for the dolls (This is serious). The course is designed to raise their intelligence, logical thinking, technical knowledge and then another category titled 'others', and it is anyone's guess what that may entail. There is nowhere else in the world that is working with the dead in the way of the people of this wonderful country - with love, happiness, kindness and care.

Another new idea is from the Thai Smile Airline, who are now offering a special seat service for Taep dolls, so they can travel in style! The Taep dolls have hit the big time. The latest development is that some restaurants have announced special Taep Doll nights where they are cared for, along with

their owners¹² but today, the immigration Police have put out a warning that they have caught someone with a Taep doll smuggling drugs, so they will now be thoroughly checked at airports. Ghost doll drug smuggling seems to be taking hold, and some dolls and their owners may next be accommodated in Thailand's jails. (The Nation, January 20th, 2016).

On many occasions, the rich kids of Bangkok could be seen going shopping or hanging out with their dolls, which can cost the equivalent of a month's wage, (even for the well educated middle classes) making it a status symbol, as well as a spiritual accessory. The funny thing is that now these have become so well known, the general public is as wary of these as they are of Kuman Thongs themselves, despite the fact that the spirit is said to come from a different realm, and that they seem less wild or demanding. The higher the child's spirit, the more benign they are, but they do still offer the opportunity for people to take care of the spirit of a child, as well as hoping for the bestowed boon. There is a karmic interplay during this process which is beneficial to both parties. While sitting in a room full of these dolls it is easy to feel their presence, and the owners interviewed dispute any idea that these are not as effective as any other Kuman Thong. One of the advantages of the Taep Dolls is that the bond between the doll and their bearer can be enhanced with this style as it plays on the history of doll adoration, but in this case, with a little ghost or angel thrown in. This style has now been adopted by the makers of actual Kuman Thong, much to their financial advantage and the acceptance of the art, meaning that the boundary between the Luk Taep's and Kuman Thong's is now blurred.

Is anyone aware of anywhere else in the world with such a thriving and popular form of necromancy?

Adopting a Kuman Thong

People from the West are often freaked out when discussing or reading about the practice of making and keeping a Kuman Thong because they often perceive it to be cruel, due to the capturing of a child's ghost. As this is an art that comes from the Asian mindset, and the ancient art of necromancy, (which is the use of the dead to aid or in some cases, harm the living) the people's of The West are being confronted by ideas that have been unknown to them till this point.

While this is an ancient art (perceived as being pre-Buddhist), the effect that Buddhism has had on this practice cannot be underestimated. What may have once been a much darker occult practice that created a spirit familiar, has been softened over the centuries to specifically raise the boon of the bearer of the Kuman, bringing luck and fortune. An interview with a Luksit of Ajarn Verataep in 2015 brought up some interesting points about the adoption of a child's spirit. He said that there has to be some advantage to the spirit for it to want to stay in the talisman, or it would move on. The first aspect of this is that it is believed that the spirit gets to feel like it has a taste of the life it missed, or had for only a short time. A wandering child

spirit suffers in the realms of hell¹³ and being placed into an effigy is believed to alleviate some of that suffering, which is a Buddhist act. The maker of these items is also showing compassion to the spirit to place it somewhere safe, as they lack the condition to be reborn into the higher realms. Admittedly, it is there to be of use to their owner, but it is better that there is an interplay which serves both parties to build the connection between them, with the owner showing compassion, and care to the child. The responsibility of owning a Kuman Thong should not be taken for granted, and it is better not to adopt if there is any chance of abandoning them later. The Thais believe that these spirits deserve a second chance to be loved.

It is a Buddhist concept that we have to seek the right understanding of knowledge for wisdom to arise, and this approach runs through all aspects of existence. When adopting a Kuman Thong, it is taking responsibility for the spirit of a child, and like all children, they have both emotional and practical needs. This spirit needs care and attention, it requires love, understanding, communication and nourishment like any child, but on top of that, it also needs spiritual care with kata and offerings. Any parent of a Kuman Thong is trying to build a beneficial symbiotic relationship with the doll, and from that care comes the boon that can be granted by these lesser ghosts. They can bring great wealth and luck to the home.

Caring for a Kuman Thong can be quite time-consuming, until it becomes part of daily life, as it would with any kid, ghost or not. A Kuman Thong is not an evil spirit as they are considered to have accepted a vow from the monk or Ajarn who made them to not harm, and it is believed that it takes an evil person to make an evil Kuman Thong. A Kuman Thong is a supernatural being, and it should not be corrupted, especially as it is a child and to corrupt a child will only lead to difficulties. Teaching the Kuman to be evil will accumulate problems and affect karma, which leads to misery. A good parent will teach their adopted child to cultivate Buddhism and gather merit, rather than do anything wrong to satisfy something deficient in the parent. The Kuman Thong is a supernatural child and a force to be reckoned with, but do not be tempted to teach them to be bad, or the wheel of karma will turn.

The instilled objective of the Kuman is to respect and to give a helping hand to his new parent. The parents are then expected to be an example and to pass on the merit they earn from good deeds to the Kuman Thong to help its spirit, and it will then bring boon in the form of luck and wishes. It is easy to see this Buddhist interplay at work. In the pursuit of improving himself and accumulating good merit for the Kuman, that then gets returned, meaning that together the bearer and the Kuman Thong can grow towards a better existence.

Having a Golden Child

It can be quite a shock to realise that these can be naughty and rowdy little chaps.

An amulet shop owner once said with a smile.

The sound of a child playing at night is reported as common by many, as well as things being moved around while they sleep, and the Kuman is also prone to come to dreams, especially if the Kuman is kept in the bedroom. The other strange thing is that a good Kuman, one that is correctly made and from a good maker can also be quite chatty. He is not audible; it is in the brain. When people consider owning a Kuman, many recommend waiting until one speaks and is friendly and then make an agreement to take care of him before purchasing (*or renting, as they say, as a spirit cannot be owned*). It is from this standpoint that the relationship begins, and he will expect his new parent to keep their side of the bargain.

The process of attaining a still enough mind for the voice of the Kuman to get through the mental babbling that is prevalent with most people is something that many folks would benefit from, and this is considered part of the spiritual growth. Not just from being able to chat to a Kuman Thong, but because of its effect on life itself. If the mind is still it is possible to get in touch with the instincts, which can be of great benefit to all, because the instincts are rarely wrong. The mind is considered to be a tricky beast in Thai Buddhism, and the clarity attained from making it calmer can change the path of life to a better direction. The results of this process bring a chance of greater happiness and understanding, as well as an increase in perception and focus. The chanting of Kata and the practice of meditation helps with the process of calming the mind. Kata also calms the Kuman Thong, and feeds him spiritually, as much as any sweet drink or bowl of rice.

Here is a story of the experience of an expat in Bangkok who collects Thai amulets.

While walking one day on the amulet market in Bangkok on the streets around the Grand Palace, where rare and wonderful things could be found, on one small stall was an old Kuman Thong. On picking it up to look at it, the Kuman started asking to be taken home in a clear and distinct voice coming from the middle of the back brain. It was a shocking experience as one had never talked before, especially with such clarity, and judging from the look on the sellers face, he could also hear it, and was eager to pass it on to a new parent. The best action at this point was to calmly explain to it that he was talking to a person who was not responsible enough to take care of a cat, let alone a golden child. On putting him down and slowly walking away, looking at the stalls and enjoying the morning, the Kuman kept chatting away. The best option here was to use a reassuring voice, wish it the best and send it some merit, but it was only when about 100 metres away that the voice faded. That Kuman would have been an awesome spirit guest in the house, but he could have also been a bit of a handful.

People who own a Kuman Thong do so for many reasons, for business (*it is said that he leads customers in by the hand*), the protection of assets, some luck when asked for and a small advantage in life in general, but his power also depends on the karma of the parent. The effectiveness of the Kuman Thong is seen as a reflection of the individual's accumulated merit, otherwise everyone would become rich, and life does not work that way.

Which one?

Choosing a Kuman Thong can be difficult as there are so many on the market and it is worth taking time, and being sure that the Kuman is suitable. Here's a few pointers that were shared by the lady in a shop that only sells Kuman Thong in North Bangkok.

There are no good Kuman Thong for just a few dollars, so buy something cheap and it will not contain the spirit of a child. These can be found on many websites, and while they are generally well made and even attractive, there is zero spiritual input into these items. It is better to either talk to a specialist, or find a reputable seller for the best Kuman Thong. Even better, come to Thailand, and find an Ajarn or Luang Phor who makes them to buy direct. Not only will the Kuman receive an extra special blessing from the maker, but the experience is appropriate for such an important talisman.

Do the research! Read as many articles as possible, and find the right people to buy from, a real one is often no more expensive than buying a fake. Only get items from reputable makers, and these should come with a kata, as well as a card insert if it is an amulet. Without this, don't buy anything. It is different with buying statues in that they are now difficult to post from Thailand due to restrictions on the export of religious items. It is worth considering combining a holiday to The Land Of Smiles with a spiritual quest to come home with a beautiful Golden Child to care for and love, in the hope that he will then bring boon to your life.

Instructions for Care - from a Kuman Thong devotee in Bangkok

It is vital that when bringing a Kuman Thong into the home that he is introduced to his new environment in a loving voice. It is better not to place him with other idols of worship, and to place him on a shelf below the Buddha, if one is present. Do not have him facing West, at the foot of the bed, or under the stairs, and if there are other Kuman Thong's in the house, inform them that they have a new brother coming to stay with them. Also, tell the spirits of the land that the house is on that a new spirit has come into the home.

Welcome the Kuman to the family by having a place for him to stay, and maybe put a small bed, cushion or cot there for the idol. He likes candles, incense and chanting the kata, because it helps with his merit and helps the parent calm the mind, which improves your connection to this spirit. Like any child, the Kuman likes sweets, fruits, milk and in Thailand, the red and very sweet bottle of soda, with a straw in it so he can drink. If he grants any luck or wishes, reward him with a toy or some clothes, and get some flowers, especially jasmine. Talk to him at all times in a loving voice, as a parent would talk to any young child. He prefers to be fed daily in the morning before the residents of the home, and his name should be called so he can receive the food (a small bowl of rice is fine). If that is not practical, he can be fed more infrequently, as long as he is told in advance as, like all kids, he enjoys structure to his life.

He is best fed in the morning and then the food removed at night. The offerings of food should be regular, but if that is difficult due to lifestyle, he can be invited to eat anything he finds in the house without your permission. If you wear a Kuman you should invite him to eat whenever you do, he will like that, and the bond will grow stronger, which is excellent for the resulting boon.

Many parents like to give a name to their Kuman, and the maker will advise on the necessary way of doing this, which usually involves an associated kata. With the kata for praise, the maker will recommend one, but according to most people, these kata are interchangeable and if there are many Kuman Thong in the home, choose the one that feels the most comfortable. After saying kata (and some have a profound effect like a mild possession with the associated tingling in the body), this is the time to ask for the desired favours from the Kuman. He can grant luck, extra charm, attractiveness, finding a new lover or partner, whatever is needed.

The most common way for the Kuman Thong to contact his parent is through dreams, and keeping a dream diary helps the process of retaining the memory long enough to see what he was doing. Some people achieve a strong connection with their spirit son, and if they have an unusually calm mind, he can communicate directly. The parent must put the work in to get to this stage, but it is possible, and the rewards are excellent, although the first time he communicates in this way can be a bit of a shock.

A Kuman Thong is a spirit child, and as such, they tend to misbehave and interfere with other children that may be in the house. The parent needs to tell the Kuman what is acceptable and what is not, but the kata should be recited before doing so. If a family is adopting him, he needs to be introduced to all the members, and they should know his name. When away from home, he needs to be told for how long and to take care of the property, but if he resides in an amulet, it is easy for him to accompany his parent.

There may come a time when it is best to leave or disown the Kuman Thong, to stop offering him food, kata and care, but this has to be done carefully. He needs to be told in a loving voice that it is time to move on, but he cannot just be thrown away or left somewhere as he will come back, and may not be very pleased. One of the best ways is to return him to the temple he was made at, to return him to his spiritual home, to the place he was born. If that is not possible, it is also OK to take him to any Thai temple and ask the monks to take care of him, they will know what to do, and have the compassion to help his spirit. Please remember to take his belongings, and maybe buy him a new toy to welcome him to his new home.

Merit should be made when leaving the Kuman and dedicate that merit to him. Tell him that he will have new friends at the temple, and to be a good boy. This process should not be taken lightly, or he may become wild, and possessions have been known to occur.

A visit to Wat Sam Ngam

Two of the famous monks from this temple in Nakhon Pathom are responsible for bringing the Kuman Thong into the modern era. Luang Phor Tae (1891 - 1981), and his follower Luang Phor Yaem (who has now sadly passed away, also at a grand old age) are monks of high repute, and a visit to the temple is essential for anyone interested in this art. Within the main hall is an 8 foot tall Kuman in the style of the temple that has the spiritual energy that one would expect, and the author was lucky to see Luang Phor Yaem as he lived in a room that looks out into the hall. His countenance was something to behold, even at his great age.

Travel to Nakhon Pathom by train from Bangkok, exit the station and turn left. Within around 50 metres there is often a truck with seats in the back on the right side of the road. Tell them the name of the Wat and they will help, it is not too complicated and to return, stand on the opposite side of the road and flag down a similar truck.

References

- 1 Chris Baker - *Khun Chang/Khun Paen* p.316
- 2 Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk* p.171
- 3 Chris Baker - *Khun Chang/Khun Paen* p.59
- 4 p.316
- 5 p.325 This is the Prince Damrong version of the story of Khun Paen
- 6 p.1174 The version of Khun Paen by Khru Jaeng
- 7 p.992 A section on the process of beautifying the dead.
- 8 p.1174 and on, the story of taking his son from the stomach of his mistress, Buakhli.
- 9 <http://kumantong-4-u.blogspot.com/2012/09/training-kumantong-for-lottery.html>
- 10 The amulet magazine Saksit September 2014.
- 11 Information collected from over 4 years of Saksit magazine and translating the articles.
- 12 <http://bangkok.coconuts.co/2016/01/25/demanding-doll-buffet-joint-launches-promotion-look-thep-haunted-dolls>.
13. J T McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk* p.270

***The Kuman Thong* - an Interview with Ajarn Perm Rung**

Kuman Thong are mentioned in the legend of Khun Paen, and he is credited with its invention. Khun Paen was an ordinary man who became a monk, learned about kata and after he left the monkhood, he had a wife named Wanthong before becoming a soldier. As a soldier he met many beautiful women, and often used his kata to make them fall in love with him, bringing them under his spell. A lady named Phim became his lover, and she became pregnant with his baby at the same time as Khun Paen's wife! Khun Paen decided that he wasn't going to leave his wife, but he still wanted the baby, so he killed Phim, and took the baby to make a Kuman Thong, to be with him spiritually everywhere he went.

The legend says that he took the baby, and grilled it to make the carcass dry. The process of creation in the saga is more akin to the making of a Luk Krok, a different type of child spirit that he could summon to help him in his life. Part of the process of making mentioned in the legend is that once the Luk Krok had dried, he could boil it with magical herbs to make Nam Man Prai Luk Krok, or use the ground bone and ashes. Once the boiling down was complete, he then used the residue left to form his Kuman Thong, meaning that he got many powerful products from his murdered child. A Kuman Thong usually has ashes or pieces of bone embedded within it as they carry strong spiritual power, but this power can be dangerous in equal measure.

Some people who obtain a Luk Krok or Kuman Thong complain that they do not feel the power, but these cases generally arise because they have not cared for the spirit properly. These spirits are children that have to be taken care of, and like normal kids they enjoy playing, eating, and they have desires of their own. If someone does not take good care of them, they can be difficult to control, in the same way as any parent who does not take the time to train their child. Many Ajarns use the Khun Paen method to make Kumans, and the most famous modern era KMT's are from Luang Phor Tae and Luang Phor Yaem of Wat Sam Ngam in Nakhon Pathom.

Please remember here that there is no mention in the story of Khun Paen carrying his spirit son as either an effigy or amulet, but he could still summon him at will, meaning that he had a powerful connection to his golden child. There is also no record of the actual origin of Kuman Thong's or who invented them as the knowledge already existed at the time of Khun Paen, and he followed that knowledge. There are some legendary types of Kuman Thong, but really, it depends on the Ajarn as some can produce very aggressive types, making them superb for protecting a home. And yes, some of these have been known to kill or drive people crazy.

What is a surprise to many devotees is that some Ajarns can make Kuman Thongs from adult bones as long as they carry the spiritual charge that results from a violent death. The Ajarn can then give the bone source a new identity through strong psychic abilities, and be able to use it as a superb



188. Ajarn Perm Rung with his wonderfully designed Kuman Thong.



189. Ajarn blessing his Kuman Thong in the graveyard.

source for a golden child. There are many types of Kuman Thong, even ones that have no Prai materials or ghost. These carry their power in a Takrut that can draw an angel or higher spirit of a child into the talisman. These are the Kuman Taep or 'Angel Child' types that are very popular in Asia.

There is a difference between the modern processes to make a Kuman and the ancient one. Originally, they would obtain a piece of a deceased baby, the correct Muan Sarn mixture, and then mix it with clay to mould it as a doll. They were roughly made and very powerful. In the modern day, the maker will just put the magical mixture in the hollow base of a statue, which can be an actual doll, made from carved wood or even cast metal. There are also many images of a Kuman that a maker can use, such as the Kuman Thong Duud Rok, where the baby is sucking on his umbilical cord from the placenta. The Kuman Thong Duud Lok is an old idea that represents the continual cycle of energy with the Kuman constantly feeding himself and renewing, much like the Ouroboros in Western magical cultures where a snake eats his tail. These different types of Kuman are just images, like a car maker that uses the same engine with different bodies.

Ajarn Rung's Wicha comes from the Central regions of Thailand, and he uses spells in the Khom script. He learned this method from many Ajarns, and through experience, then combined the knowledge to make his own unique style. Many Ajarns of worth do this as their bodies become the mixing bowl for many methods to create talismans, eventually making their product unique. If Ajarn makes a batch of say 50 Kuman Thong talismans that contain the bone of a drowned baby (an extremely potent source), this will be shared between the amulets, and they will have the same ghost. It all depends on Ajarn's feeling with the source of the ingredients as to what to add to that batch. Another batch from a different bone source may have very different Muan Sarn, depending on what Ajarn wants to achieve with that Kuman. Many mixtures can be made to vary the qualities of the attributes, but the bone source has to be correct to be a Kuman Thong. Ajarn also states very clearly that once he acquires a good bone source, he will make everything at once and not save any of the bone as it is better to create a Kuman with everything available. The spirit 'sits' better in the amulet by following this method.

To ensure that each amulet made has an equal mixture of the bone and Muan Sarn it has to be mixed very well indeed, and it can take a long time until the process is complete. The mixing is an essential process, because there has to be an equal mix of the ingredients to ensure that all the amulets made will carry the spirit equally. The one that a person is attracted to enough to acquire it will not be the same one that others will choose, and Ajarn believes that the amulet is selecting the person rather than the other way round.

Ajarn Perm Rung goes to the graveyard to bless any mixture made before constructing a Kuman talisman as this brings more power to them. To hold this ceremony, he needs the permission of the guardian spirits of the cemetery,

which is an essential part of creating his golden children. He only uses the original spirit in the acquired bone source rather than building a new spirit. Others may disagree, but Ajarn finds this to be a better way. Please remember that there are two different types of Kuman Thong, Kuman Taep or Luk Taep versions that do not have a spirit or ghost and instead, a Takrut is used to bring power as well as various Muan Sarn to bring other attributes. The other version of the Kuman Thong holds Prai, has a ghost and follows the ancient method of creating a golden boy.

A question often arises about the two genders of Kuman Thong, the Kumaree and Kuman Thong, and the only difference between them is that the Kumaree is a girl and the Kuman Thong a boy. Initially, the magicians of old only used a boy spirit, but like all living forms of magic, this can change over time. The reason the Kumaree became very popular is that of the modern interest from women regarding the Kuman Thong magic, but because of the raw appearance of many Kuman, they were deterred from acquiring them. The Ajarns answered this demand by making the image more appealing to women. The Wicha for the two types is the same, but the difference with the Kumaree is that we add more attributes to the magic. There are kata added and more elements in the Muan Sarn. Before the modern times, resources were limited to the local area but now, through the internet everything is available, and an Ajarn can construct a more complex item.

If you do not take care of a Kuman Thong well, whatever they grant, they can take away. When devotees forget to offer food to the Kuman or forget about caring for them, it is impossible to predict what the child ghost will do in return. Ajarn Rung knows of one devotee who won the lottery and bought a new car, a new house and more but forgot about his deal with his Kuman and strangely, he had an accident in the car and then problems came with the house. Any bargains made with spirits need to be kept, and that is the same for all types of prai talismans.

When people ask for wishes from their Kuman, always make sure that it is something that they can do, don't be unrealistic or make complicated requests. It is also important to keep the language simple and clear. Then gifts need to be given in return for the excellent boon that they can bring. It is best to spoil them a little with sweets, make merit for them, provide them with a toy, or make an offering at a temple in their honour every time they bring something good, and this will keep them happy. When making Tamboon at a temple, think of the Kuman so he can receive that merit and benefit from it, eventually rising in the spiritual realms. They have to be treated like a child and reward them when they have been good. Never offer them alcohol, fresh meat or savoury food as they can become addicted to these things and become more aggressive. Everything has to be cooked or ready-made to keep them calm and happy, just like a kid.

The Kuman Thong - an Interview with Ajarn Nahn Khong

The modern process of making Kuman Thong has changed considerably since the time of Khun Paen. There are many legends about how to make them, such as roasting the baby first or pickling it in a jar and then drying it. The maker would then have to take the baby to the graveyard, cordon off an area with Sai Sin and say the kata to construct the 32 parts of the body, some of which will also serve as a method to adopt the Kuman Thong as a child. There are many kata that have to be spoken in this method of construction, using the real baby as a Kuman Thong that has to be kept.

In modern times, a doll is used as a substitute for a real child, but the kata is original, which of course depends on the lineage of the Ajarn but basically, the kata have not changed since ancient times. In the base of the doll, they will insert the Prai and Muan Sarn materials, and reconstitute the child spirit from this collection of spiritually active materials. Some Ajarns will write the kata on the gold or silver metal and put inside the doll along with an array of soils from 7 graveyards, 7 markets, 7 ant hills, 7 fields and 7 shores as a representation of the fertility of the land, the bounty of it and the energy. Sometimes they will use some objects that have been used for gambling to boost the attribute of luck or trading in business. It depends on the purpose the Kuman Thong is designed for by the Ajarn, some are used for good fortune and success, and others are made to protect the house and guard the property. Each purpose of the Kuman Thong calls for the use a different kata, and if a person understands some of the ways these are constructed they will realise what an involved process it is to create them.

Regarding the Muan Sarn that are placed in the Kuman Thong, if it is being created by an Ajarn who wants Metta within the item, it requires a different Muan Sarn, Takrut and Kata. This aspect is the same for the other attributes such as Saneah, Chok Larp, Maha Amnat etc., where a different recipe and different kata are followed. Some Ajarns even use all the soils mentioned before, using them to make an effigy with a hole at the base where they can put the Muan Sarn and the Prai materials. With the complexities involved in making these, it is easy to understand that many Ajarns can come up with a different method of creation as well as different ways to represent and house their magic, which is particularly true in the case that some now make resin casts and basically, any method they can think of to create the Kuman.

When Ajarn Nahn Khong creates a Kuman Thong, much of the magic used is elemental, and the kata for earth, air, fire, water and the four directions is repeated consistently until the elements are sufficiently powerful within the doll. In Lanna Wicha, the day of making a Kuman Thong plays an important role as the number of the kata spoken varies with each particular day of the week. The day is important because the Ajarn has to convince the spirit of the child to be an obedient, good spirit for the owner, and this quality varies with the day of construction. This method must be followed diligently; otherwise, the spirit will be unruly. When Ajarn obtains enough of the correct

Muan Sarn for a batch of Kuman Thong, he only adds the bone from one child and makes sure that this is well mixed before the creation, so one batch is one spirit, but each of the dolls is given the 32 parts of the body enchantment.

The appearance of the Kuman Thong is influenced by the commercial nature of modern Thai magic. Some raise one arm, some both, some suck on their intestines, some beckon for money in the same way as Nang Kwak. There are so many styles that can develop into the new varieties that will refresh the demand for these spirit children.

The beliefs concerning Kuman Thong have been passed down through the generations and today; people still believe in this spirit because they bring luck and can change the course of a person's fortune. Some people in Thailand can see whether another person has started to worship Kuman Thong as their wealth may increase very quickly, leading to many beginning to worship this child spirit, and good ones are passed through the generations of a family. If the family did not want to keep a Kuman once their relative has passed away, it can be given away to a different owner or a ritual is performed to free the spirit. After this, the doll itself should either be destroyed, put into flowing water or given to a monk at a temple for him to care of it. At temples, there are often many broken Kuman Thongs, broken spirit houses and other spiritual items that have been replaced by their owners, and these cannot be just thrown away so are again, left to be cared for by the temple.

For any foreigners obtaining my Kuman Thong, first burn 16 sticks of incense to their guardian spirit before bringing it into the house. For some people, even though they have a Kuman Thong, their fate may not be good with each other, and the Kuman spirit will not stay with them. Once the Kuman Thong is in the house, they have to light another five incense sticks to inform the spirits of the land and the house spirits to open a way for the Kuman Thong to live in the house. Once he is in the house, he should not be on an altar close to the toilet or in the bedroom, because it can make him naughty. The food suitable for a child should be offered to the Kuman as well as sweets and fruit, for bribing him via his sweet tooth. These can be provided as infrequently as once per week but if your time is stretched, it can be every 15 days but no longer than that or he may go searching in your food cupboards (*laughter*). As a reward for wishes granted or good boon, clothes and toys are often offered and please care for him well; he is just a child.

A Kuman Thong Statue by Ajarn Nahn Khong

Ajarn Khong's Kuman Thong statue is from golden Teak wood (Maai Sak Thong) from a tree that had been struck by lightning, which makes this wood special enough for it to be used as a Taep style Kuman Thong. Because of the supernatural power in the wood, Ajarn could use this to create an angel style of Kuman Thong. Many special kinds of wood can be used to make this style of statue, and a lightning wood is an excellent choice.

With the correct praise, this statue offers Metta and Maha Amnat through the Takrut present, which also creates and holds the angel to the figure. Everything under the statue was inserted at the same time and then blessed together, rather than individually, and this is often the case when producing small runs of figures (there were only five made). Each Kuman Thong like this has to have strong, spiritually active elements and the primary source for this was the power of the lightning, which was then enhanced through the ritual of consecration, adding the attributes and creating the angel. The important thing with all Kuman Thong is to make merit. Go to the temple, do good deeds, live a good life and donate some of this merit to help your Kuman Thong rise in the spirit world, and then receive his help in return. It is a beautiful cycle.

190. The Kuman Thong statue of Ajarn Nahn Khong.





191. A still birth Luk Krok that is taken care of by monks.

The Luk Krok

The spirits of stillborn or miscarried babies are supernaturally potent, because they contain the energy of the life not lived ¹. One now rare form of these infant spirits is the Luk Krok, which can be constructed as a talisman in a few ways; as an effigy in an amulet that will contain the relevant child materials, as a dedicated enamel panel talisman, or as a real stillborn baby. The most highly valued Luk Krok talismans are small, real foetus's that are not fully developed; then baked dry and kept as powerful protective charm, to be nurtured or enchanted, so it will love and hence protect its master ². It differs from the Kuman Thong in two ways. Firstly, the Luk Krok has to be a stillborn child, and the mother remains unharmed, which can occur at any point during the pregnancy whereas the Kuman Thong can be made from a foetus or unborn child that has died through any process; or even a child that died before puberty. And secondly, the Wicha for creating the Luk Krok differs substantially, making the Luk Krok a little less 'chatty', acting more like a spirit guardian or bodyguard. It can still help the bearer with prosperity and wishes, but the relationship between the holder and the spirit is not the same as with a Kuman Thong.

The way to create a Luk Krok depends on the lineage of the maker, but a dead foetus needs to be obtained, dried over heat to desiccate and preserve it. Depending on the maker, the carcass will then be lacquered or have gold leaf added, which follows an ancient practice where lacquer or beeswax was used to hide any purification from a corpse, while the gold was purely to beautify ³. During the process of creating the Luk Krok, which is made at an auspicious time; specific and ancient incantations are cast on the body. The person creating the Luk Krok will request the child spirit to enter its bodily remains or the effigy that contains a portion of them, and remain there. Due to the power of the magic associated with the Luk Krok, some are said to be very dangerous, with the ability to kill, and these items are justifiably feared in Thailand.

There is a famous Luk Krok in one particular Wat in Thailand that was kept in the residence of the monks, but these baby spirits are sometimes naughty. The Luk Krok at the monastery started to tease the young novice monks, and it finally had to be brought to the ordination hall to be contained ⁴. Like all strong spirits, great care has to be taken so that they do not interfere with the lives of the living in any negative way.

As with the origin of the Kuman Thong, the Wicha of making the Luk Krok dates back before recorded history and through the interviews conducted, there seems to be marked differences between the lineages as to how to make a Luk Krok. The differences in Wicha has resulted in a variety of ideas about this spirit, and due to the rarity of these items it would be difficult to surmise that any are wrong. Another case of 'same same but different' as the Thais often say. The different methodologies may all work, and no one

is yet in any position of authority on these matters to say otherwise. It would take a national plotting of lineages and their techniques to come to a concrete conclusion on this, and that is not likely to happen as the makers protect their Wicha, which has been held a secret for generations.

A real Luk Krok is considered to be one of the most potent magical items within the Thai system and as such, command very high prices. The scarcity of the source materials also adds to the value, but it does appear that the Wicha for creating these is more widespread than once thought as quite a few practitioners have produced these potent talismans over the past few years. Collectors and practitioners are currently driving the demand for Luk Krok in China, Singapore and Taiwan, but this may change as the Thai Occult system becomes better known in The West. The value of a Luk Krok depends on the size (the larger ones cheaper) and the maker. Foetal Luk Krok's are the most valued of all, and are as expensive as they are rare.

The Taiwan Affair

There was a famous case some years ago of a Taiwanese man who held a British passport being caught trying to take six gold covered, real Luk Krok out of the country, and quite brazenly too. He was going to sell them to practitioners in Taiwan and China, where there is a ready market for these amongst a particular circle of collectors at very high prices.

Stories of the procurement of these items also arise periodically, with the last one being of a nurse who had collected them from the hospital where she worked, and she had 14 when the Police searched her house. The trade in these is thought to be quite large but very underground, and the porous borders surrounding Thailand aids their export. Where there is a demand and considerable financial gains involved, people will always find a way.

Many devotees of the Thai magical arts are wary of the Luk Krok because of their reputation, but the makers still produce both amulets and statues to fill the need of the market. The artistic expression of these items is excellent, and some collectors swear by their efficiency although, in the West, many find this use of a child's spirit to be a little too much to handle. The people of South East Asia do not have the same relationship to death as Western folk, and they see these purely as an aid to gain benefit in life.

1. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p316

2. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p316

3. as above p992

4. Suksit magazine January 2013



192. A real Luk Krok has the power to shock.



193. A highly prized small Luk Krok and two hands drying in the sun in the garden of an Ajarn. The small Luk Krok was very expensive.

The Luk Krok - These interviews are anonymous for obvious reasons but both makers are renowned for creating astonishing Luk Krok's.

A Luk Krok and a Kuman are often confused, but they are from different sources. A Kuman is made from a baby, but the Luk Krok has never been born alive, either because of an accident with the mother, a stillborn birth, or from a miscarriage. With a stillborn birth, this does not mean that the baby is fully developed, it has died sometime before full gestation, and the foetus is small. The old people believe that a Luk Krok has energy in itself, a power within and it doesn't have to be blessed or created with magic in any way. The process of obtaining a Kuman Thong differs from that of a Luk Krok. A Kuman has to be blessed and worked on through a specific method to give it power, whereas the Luk Krok has the power within already. Ajarn is not talking here about the modern type of Kuman that is a doll or effigy with the Wicha of a Hoon Payon, but with a child spirit in it. This statement is about a full body Kuman, a real Kuman from legend and yes, they are still made in Thailand today.

The process of making a Luk Krok is that first, the Luk Krok must be dried, and in the past people only used salt and turmeric for the process. This was to preserve it and then some makers then covered it with gold leaf. It can be either dried with the aid of fire, or dried in the sun and because it is so small, this does not take long. The real Luk Krok often doesn't need to be blessed, but there are stories about giving power to it and what to do when you acquire one of these potent beings. Some people say that when receiving a Luk Krok, it must be fed with milk for the first seven days and taken care of like a real baby. Put it in a crib, pretend to bathe it and care for it as you would if it was alive, and others suggest that this should be done for a month. When the tragedy of a stillbirth occurs, the parents may ask an Ajarn to prepare the child as a Luk Krok so that they can take care of it as if it was alive, and look after its spirit. Other parents would be scared of this and donate it to an Ajarn for him to decide who should have this spirit to care for properly, and to love.

Where a full body is too expensive or not available, parts of the Luk Krok are also used as an amulet, which can be extremely powerful. For instance, the finger of a baby can be potent with love magic and Maha Saneah, which is the same for the whole hand but in modern times, the belief is that the hand is an excellent talisman for gambling. That is not the only function for this though. The finger is like a hand pointing so that when a man likes a woman, he can suggest to the spirit of the Luk Krok that he wants the woman to be the Luk Krok's mother, pointing at her with the finger to direct the power. If someone has the feet of a Luk Krok, the spirit can use the feet to run to people to persuade them to do the bidding of his Master. In effect, each part of a Luk Krok has similar power as it is all strongly Athan, but there are also beliefs about the specific powers relating to the various components of its body. In reality, though, the owner can decide how it is used, for love, for business or whatever but the important thing is the spirit and to keep it happy with the correct devotions, feeding and care.

A Luk Krok can be compared to a knife; it can be used in many ways. It can be used to cut, to prepare food or be used to harm other people. However a person wants to use the spirit of a Luk Krok is up to them but yes, these can cause great harm and even kill, but only if the owner dictates that direction. Depending on how it is used, the spirit will be different, and the ones able to kill or encouraged to cause harm to others can become quite wild. In the past, the use of spirits and ghosts in this type of magic was not used for Saneah, business or charm for good luck, they used them for fighting in wars and against enemies. They were used to harm, by causing illness or even death.

With a Luk Krok, it depends on how you want to use it. It can be used to help yourself or harm others, but the spirit is the same as ordinary people, and sometimes they feel lazy. The kata for a Luk Krok is used to give it commands and to keep it in line, but it does not mean that everyone who has a Luk Krok and knows the kata can direct it correctly. A Luk Krok needs attention as well as jobs; it needs taking care of as well as being made to work. Some Ajarns who have a Luk Krok will not offer food unless the spirit works first and if successful, the spirit gets fed because if they overeat before working, they get lazy. Why work when you get fed every day anyway? In the past, some people would not keep the spirit at home, they preferred to keep it in a graveyard or under a big tree, and when they wanted to use it, they would go to where they kept it. These would be fed very infrequently and therefore, the spirit would be very eager to perform the tasks given.

The Luk Krok - an interview with another famous maker

The Kuman Thong is the spirit of a child that is used to possess a doll but with the Luk Krok, an Ajarn uses the actual body of the baby, and it has to be dead at birth. The best Luk Krok is where the mother dies with the child in an accident or some other way, and they are crazy powerful. In the past, if a lady miscarried or the child was stillborn the parents could feel that the child can still be of some benefit to the family (they were tough times), and there was bound to be some remorse at their loss, so some would ask for their baby to be made into a Luk Krok. In this way, they could keep it so that the spirit could protect the household and still help the family. This action still occurs within some remote temples where the monks will perform the ceremony for them openly, but generally, this is now an illegal trade, and so the makers must be very cautious. This Ajarn has had mothers come to him to offer their miscarried baby, because they could not bear the total loss of their child.

Between the Kuman Thong and the Luk Krok, the latter is much more powerful because the Luk Krok already have their own 32 parts of the body (except for their teeth). With a Kuman, the Ajarn often has to create its body magically to make it work as a talisman. When creating a Luk Krok the correct astrology is essential; it has to be on the right day and at the right time. It's more difficult to make a Luk Krok because a ritual needs to be made to separate the bond between the mother and the child first, which can be tricky. Even though it is often considered to be difficult to obtain a baby to

make into a Luk Krok, it is easier nowadays because of the availability of aborted materials. The demand is also still there because some people who believe in Luk Krok's, once they have one and their magical child aids their life, they get more and more. There is one guy who has over 10, and is still buying! In the past, Luk Krok's were only made to be praised, but nowadays with the internet, there are more people interested in this knowledge and want to have one. Prices are still rising for these magical children. They are expensive, and one recently went for one million baht although that one got confiscated at the airport.

To bucha a Luk Krok is more difficult than a Kuman Thong because it is a real child and it needs to be fed three times per day, caring for it as if it is alive. The new parent has to take excellent care of it because there are downfalls with having such powerful items. Never, ever offer raw meat to a Luk Krok because it addicts the spirit, and they become aggressive. They can also become more potent than the Ajarn originally intended them to be, and then they will be difficult to keep under control. On the other hand, if they are not properly fed, they will not help, and in these circumstances, can also take back two or three times what they have bestowed. They are quite vengeful when improperly treated.

194. A dressed Luk Krok with corpse hair, sat on the panneng of the mother.





195. A fabulously expensive Phra Ngang from Ajarn Phrot.

Phra Ngang

Of all the spirits and deities discussed in this book, Phra Ngang has the best chance of becoming a worldwide phenomenon. There are no reliable reference materials on him, not even a Wikipedia post, but he is the one that Westerners seem to be attracted to the most due to his nature and sensibilities 1. Of all the Thai deities, Phra Ngang is considered easy to relate to and is thought to be the closest to understanding the human heart 2. From this aspect, it is easy to understand the modern phenomenon of Phra Ngang, which has its subculture in Asia with associated chat sites, and even Facebook pages. On one of these is a steady stream of posted photos of various Phra Ngang for people to admire, comment on and be jealous of.

Phra Ngang is easily recognised with his pointed hat, which can be straight or bent (generally, he dresses to the right) and sometimes, his protruding red eyeballs. He can also be depicted as bald with a rounded head, almost like a Buddha, in which case he is known as Phra Chai, who inhabits a higher spiritual realm than Phra Ngang. Many forms of Phra Ngang have many names - Phor Ngan, Phor Ngat and Phor Per, and with these it is a similar Wicha that use some of his old names for amulets and bucha that house similar entities. All the forms of Phra Ngang are considered to be a type of demon, some with bulging red eyes that suggest that he can see more than this realm and has the ability to adapt the future of his followers 3. Phra Ngang tends to attract people from the edges of society as he is easy going, likes a drink, enjoys loads of sex and brings good fortune to your life.

The usual story put forward by the online chat sites is that Phra Ngang originated as a deity after the fall of Ayuthaya to the Burmese in the 18th century. After the battle, some Buddha statues were found on the battlefield that had been soaked with the blood of the fallen, encrusting around the eyes and giving a different magical feel than the usual Buddha statue. The holders of these items found that they granted wishes readily and the worship of Phra Ngang was born. From chats with two famous Ajarns, they stated that the deity is much older than this tale, leaving the story as an example of the Thai tendency to appoint various practices to specific people or events. The same has happened with the Kuman Thong, in that his creation has been attributed to Khun Paen, even though Khun Paen learned the Wicha from his teachers, who were themselves part of a lineage of Masters 4.

Phra Ngang is an animist nature deity that is said to reside on a mountain 5. Some think that he is a real creature and others that there are many Phra Ngang, all with a slightly different character and attributes. His actual age can be related to the fact that he is often depicted as having a wife or partner, represented as a female with her legs open, happily displaying her vagina. This is the pre-Buddhist figure of Mae Per (or E Per), the deity associated with fertility who holds the power of the female force through the blood spilt during childbirth. She is bounty, and the energy of creation itself, while Phra Ngang is the seed. In the Northern Thai, Lanna traditions, Phra Ngang is depicted as her consort 6. They sometimes even share a kata

due to having a similar root and both bring a naturalism to life through the forces of nature and the understanding of the self. Both deities appreciate alcohol as an offering, and both accept devotees of any gender, race or creed. It is this open, natural aspect that draws many to them. They work to enhance the self, bringing about change through the experience of life and the intelligence their devotees possess.

Phra Ngang is said to influence the bearer to choose his path, and make decisions as to how life should be lived. Should his follower decide to use Phra Ngang to attract wealth and sexual partners while being an adulterer or lying to and cheating people, Phra Ngang will encourage that person to go further down that path. He reacts to the direction the bearer has chosen and will then accentuate it, becoming more naughty if the devotee is naughty but also guiding them to be a better person if that direction is selected. Phra Ngang places the responsibility of all actions firmly and squarely upon the bearer, as well as any resulting problems for those choices.

Associated with his path is Phra Ngang's ability to attract females. He is said to often goes missing in the home, only to be found in a ladies knicker drawer, and offering knickers that have been worn to him will encourage wild sexuality. A similar experience has been reported by many devotees in that when first becoming a follower of Phra Ngang, they take the wilder path, but as awareness comes, a natural evolution can take place. A self-awareness from having Phra Ngang can arise, and from that, a better way is generally chosen because if all the devotee expects are benefits without making merit to balance the gifts there can be a readjustment through some adversity. Mastery of the self is the key. ⁷

Phra Ngang's intent is to gain spiritual merit. His origins are believed to be that of a spirit who was raised higher through attaining merit, and he desires to rise further in the spiritual hierarchy.⁸ He is also seen as a kind of karmic loan shark, able to bestow boon, but only at the cost of the future boon, which is why it is crucial to make merit if a person becomes a follower in order to keep the balance. The worship of Phra Ngang calls for an attentive understanding of life and how it works, with nothing considered as being free, and the devotee having full responsibility for themselves. It is this aspect that seems to be one that is eventually cherished the most by the followers of Phra Ngang, because he cultivates growth in the individual, an awareness of the nature of life. For every advantage Phra Ngang bestows the devotee must balance that by dedicating acquired merit to Phra Ngang in the form of charity, kindness to others or making merit at a temple. This path is considered the way of personal growth, and with that wisdom can be attained, along with a bestowed 6th sense that comes from worshipping Phra Ngang with kata and offerings.

Phra Ngang gives the attributes of Maha Saneah, Maha Niyom and Chok Laap, drawing people to the bearer, then leaving it to the holder to work with that attraction. Like all of these items, these do not enslave or entirely enchant, and the bearer has to develop himself to grow to understand and



196. Two hand carved Phra Ngang in Ngiew Dam wood from a graveyard.
By Ajarn Phun.



197. And this is Phra Chai, a 'higher' form of Phra Ngang. This fabulous statue was made by one of the greatest makers for Phra Ngang, Ajarn Poon of Ubon.

work with the advantage that is given. Phra Ngang is also considered to be the deity to turn to when things get sticky as he grants wishes with ease. He can do this, but it is generally at the cost of future luck and fortune, like a spiritual banker but sometimes, everyone needs a bridging loan to get through a bad patch. This deficit is later restored through making merit. Making merit is the key. How many times does this need saying?

When wearing a Phra Ngang from a reputable maker, the devotee should feel enveloped, reportedly like an extra aura, and many followers also recommend having a statue at home, a leader of the pack who keeps order. Very few statues are made of Phra Ngang, and good ones often sell out quickly. Phra Ngang generally come in a few forms.

Ayuthaya Phra Ngang - Generally, these are a 4" to 7" metal figure of Phra Ngang that often have earth underneath, which has to come from a spiritually active place. This style has been made for a long time and has been popular for generations, especially in the Isaan region (NE Thailand). The most collected ones have copper eyes and are known as Taa Daeng, (red eyes), but like all things, the way it was constructed and blessed is the most crucial aspect. This style of Phra Ngang can be made of any metal, but the Samlit metal is most valued. Samlit is a mix of three metals, and it holds the blessing well enough for there to be no need for any Prai element.

Wood Phra Ngang – Many types of wood in Thailand are considered to hold magical properties and to use those types to make a Phra Ngang offers another source of power. They may still be Prai based, but the wood can also bring great power if it is from a good source. The choice of wood used depends on the lineage of the maker and the scented woods, or woods associated with spirits, natural phenomenon and myths are best. 9

Moulded Phra Ngang - The bulk of Phra Ngang's available from the Thai makers are made from a spiritually active mixture, that will include cemetery earths, bone, herbs for Maha Saneah and whatever else the Wicha of the maker dictates. This mix is then cast into an image of the makers choice, and extra elements pressed into the back before drying.

There are no public shrines in Thailand to Phra Ngang as he is generally considered to be an occult deity, a type of demon, which makes many a little wary of him. Many devotees actually think of him as real, and holding great influence in their lives.

The worship of Phra Ngang

Besides the sex, drugs and rock n'roll reputation of this deity, the worship of Phra Ngang is said to help in finding your soul mate, increase gambling and wealth luck, improve relationships, and grant an assured calmness to his devotees. The consensus is that he likes fresh water every day, fruit (especially coconuts and bananas), incense, flowers and also a glass of rum or whiskey along with the odd cigarette too! The latter two items are left

as thanks for granted wishes or for a bit of downtime for the deity, where he can kick back and enjoy a drink and smoke.

The kata for Phra Ngang vary wildly and depend on the maker but again, these are considered to be interchangeable and should the devotee have many Phra Ngang from many makers it is best to choose just one, usually the one for the dominant statue, and the rest will benefit from his influence. If there's more than one amulet, vary which one is worn as they all have slightly different attributes depending on their construction. Some are angled towards gambling, some towards sex, some to love and some have a higher dose of the feeling of being enveloped by this deity. 10

From chatting in the online sites, it seems that the most important thing is to get a Phra Ngang from a reputable maker; otherwise, it could be something spiritually empty. Take time to understand any deity or spirit that appeals and then explore how to attain the real thing.

1. Interview with a dealer, January 2016.
2. Interview with Soo Boon Ang, March 2016
3. Ajarn Chalerm, May, 2016
4. Chris Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p55
5. Ajarn Spencer 2014
6. Ajarn Chalerm, May 2016
7. Chris Baker *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p943
8. Ajarn Chalerm, May 2016
9. The Luksit of Ajarn Chalerm, May, 2016.
10. Phra Ngang chat site based in Singapore.

Phra Ngang - an interview with Ajarn Khaw

There are many old stories about Phra Ngang, but who knows which is correct, no one really knows. Phra Ngang is for charming and for sex. He likes dirty places, loves used underwear, and adores the period blood of women. Phra Ngang is a low deity, but he is often depicted to look a little like the Buddha, even though he is not the enlightened one. So people changed the top to have a bend in the hat, and sometimes add large red or copper eyes to give him a more definite identity.

The worship of Phra Ngang is ancient, and it is impossible to say if he comes from Cambodia as the Lanna region also has Phra Ngang, Burma has a version of it too, the same for the Tai Yai. He is often put with Mae Per because life has Yin/Yang. Phra Ngang is the male form, Mae Per is the female, and together they have the power of the couple combined, like the Indian male gods have a female partner. They represent THE balance in life, the male and female balance that creates life itself.

This statue of Phra Ngang is made from Maai Sak Thong (Golden Sak Wood, which is so hard that it can be worked to a sharp point to make Sak Yant tattoos). It is a beautiful and expensive wood, but these pieces are



198. A Phra Ngang made from Suicide Wood by Ajarn Khaw.
A photograph of Ajarn blessing this Ngang is on p198.



199. A magnificent Phra Ngang carved from lightning wood.
By Ajarn Perm Rung.

special because people have hung themselves from this branch, which is why there were only 5 of these made. The authorities cut the branch they died on to deter other suicides on that tree, and a friend kept the branch for Ajarn to use for these statues. There is energy in the wood, but the items underneath add extra power. There is bone from a man who had many wives and a phial of Nam Man Waan for Saneah; Ajarn also made the Phra Ngang placed under the statue, and that contains bone too. The Samlit metal Inn Khoo, like everything else underneath this statue has to be blessed individually to have the energy of what it represents before inserting it, so each item there has power. The Takrut was written in a cemetery, and it is for charm. All of these items bring energy to the Phra Ngang.

Phra Ngang - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

The origin of Phra Ngang is unclear, but this type of ancient magical knowledge is deeply involved with sexual desire. Any Sak Yant to Phra Ngang is generally placed on the thigh, and an amulet to Phra Ngang is usually worn below the waist, the area reserved for sex magic. Phra Ngang may exist as a physical being but he is also a legend or myth, and it is impossible to be sure as to what is true, although one thing is for sure, the power of magic rises if the devotee believes. An Ajarn cannot be entirely sure that Phra Ngang exists, so it is vital to only focus on the kata of creation and the knowledge of the Wicha to create talismans to this popular deity.

(Please remember that Ajarn holds precepts and has to avoid lying or deceiving people in any way)

The kata for making a Phra Ngang or a Sak Yant to him is very rude, and an Ajarn will usually chant it very quietly so people cannot hear. Ajarn Rung's Wicha comes from a translation of a Khmer Wicha for their creation, and its rawness still surprises him. One of the old beliefs is that Phra Ngang likes menstrual blood and this is sometimes given as an offering from devotees, but this should only be done if the maker recommends it. Get the advice of the maker with this aspect because some Phra Ngang will go a bit wild if offered the wrong things, especially where blood is concerned. In Thai magic, anything to do with menstrual blood is usually associated with a low type of occultism that affects the higher magical items, removing all its power. If a man has a high amulet or a Sak Yant that is high on the body (and therefore more highly spiritual), they should not allow a woman to walk over them due to the effect of menstrual blood. In the past there are stories of people who had strong magical powers such as invincibility and to be able to harm or attack that person, they had to soak a bullet in menstrual blood.

These days, most Phra Ngang do not need menstrual blood, but do enjoy alcohol, cigarettes and some raw meat, and he is mostly for Saneah, Chok Laap and Metta. The blessing or making of a Phra Ngang statue sometimes includes the placing of the Phra Ngang on a woman's breasts or private parts to strengthen this ancient form of sex magic. There's also some wilder stories than that, but it is best not to share such things as it tempts people to be extreme.

Now let's discuss the fact that in some countries where he is popular, Phra Ngang is often associated with 'backlash' (backlash is where there is a sudden crash in fortunes). Backlash can happen because Phra Ngang can sometimes lead people to become addicted to sex, and this results in the taking of the body's energy, reducing the power of the person, which leads to the fall. Some devotees can also become addicted to the good fortune aspect, and people then forget to praise Phra Ngang, but backlash is more commonly associated with Kuman Thong and Luk Krok, rather than Phra Ngang. If a devotee goes through a period where there is a collapse in good fortune, it is best to begin the process of praising again, but these talismans are like people and once upset with a person, their help may not return to what it was before.

Phra Ngang - an interview with Ajarn Aek

The precise history for Phra Ngang is unknown, but Ajarn Aek believes that Phra Ngang is a representation of Phra Chai, which originated from Ayuthaya. The appearance of a Phra Chai amulet is very similar to a modern-day Phra Ngang, except that he has a bald head or a pointed crown, rather than the bent crown that Phra Ngang wears. Phra Chai was originally made for a soldier either before or after a war to celebrate their victory or to embolden the soldier (one of the meanings of 'Chai' in Thai is 'Victory'). In the years after the war, people forgot about the Phra Chai until they were found in old Chedis and temple areas. As these areas were thoroughly searched and excavated over the past few decades, these small old statues became a highly collectable item.

The appearance of Phra Chai became adapted into the Phra Ngang, but we are not sure whether it is the same thing. Ajarn Aek thinks Phra Chai was the source of the Phra Ngang image, but not of the legend of Phra Ngang sex magic. Phra Ngang is often made from wood or metal, but the old ones usually have a ring attached to the back so it can be worn around the waist, hung towards the groin. This action is vital because there are also legends about the power of Phra Ngang's sex magic, often disappearing and then found in a ladies soiled underwear. Because of his wanderings, devotees had to tie him around the waist, to stop him going off to look for his beloved soiled ladies underwear.

Some people believe that the image could also come from an unconsecrated Buddha statue, but he has no robes (akin to a low demonic Buddha). Others think that the small figure itself can be used as a physical and spiritual weapon when the pointed hat is facing out. He seems to be something more readily used by the common person and is still very popular in the North East of Thailand.

Usually, when a Phra Ngang of this type is made (see photo), it is just blessed to push the Saneah and the Metta into the Samlit metal, with the Thai earth stuffed inside. There is nothing special about the earth with this style; it is the blessing that is special.



200. Wonderful, old style Phra Ngang and Phra Chai from Ajarn Aek.
The 'Taa Daeng' or red eye ones are highly desired by devotees.



201. A recent Phra Ngang amulet from Ajarn Suea that was carved from a palm tree that was hit by lightning. Ajarn Suea only makes very special Phra Ngang amulets because he wants them to be of the most benefit to his devotees.

Phra Ngang - an interview with Ajarn Suea

There are two legends about Phra Ngang, both claiming him to be a mighty magician who holds dominion over ghosts and having immense invincibility (Kong Grapan). With the first legend, Phra Ngang is obsessed with sexual activity, and if he finds any pretty girl, he can use his magic to make every one to fall asleep in her house, so he can enter and have sex with that lady. By the time Phra Ngang got older, he had acquired so many enemies that his parents advised him to join the monkhood to be safer, and to bring a balance to life. When he was about to ordain, he went through the ceremony, dressed in white clothes and mounted a horse to circle the temple, but then saw a beautiful woman, jumped off the horse to pursue her, but he fell. It was during this fall that he bent his crown into Phra Ngang's distinctive shape. Some of the Lanna legends about Phra Ngang say that he did not wear a crown as he was entering the monkhood, and this is the source of the bald-headed version of Phra Ngang, often called Phra Chai. The reason Phra Ngang usually has red eyes is that he has been hit by so many angry parents as they found him pursuing or having sex with their daughters.

In the second legend, Phra Ngang is a Lersi, one of the 108 Ruesi who's name is Ruesi Nok Kaew. This Lersi holds potent magic for Maha Saneah, and strong magic for invincibility. This Lersi was obsessed with sex, and he used his Saneah magic to extremes. Any woman who saw him ended up either having sex with him or becoming his lover, but as time passed, he decided to turn himself around, often disguising himself with old clothing, a bent crown and sometimes with swollen eyes (there are versions of Ngang with swollen eyes). No matter what he looked like, Phra Ngang was still easy to find as he always passed gas and sometimes, when the amulet of this Lersi is made they sometimes make it with metal, keep it hollow inside and put in a pea or bell that signifies the sound of passing gas. Eventually, this Lersi became known as Phra Ngang and even though there are two different legends, no one has any idea if either is correct.

In the past, Ajarns considered Phra Ngang as a Grand Master of Prai magic, and there are other legends about Phra Ngang, but even though he is called Phra, which is a term to address a monk, he never entered the monkhood because he chose to jump off the horse and chase a woman. Phra Ngang also has many names - Phor Per, Phor Ngat and Ai Ngang and these can be considered to be avatars of Ngang, and each has a different pose, but essentially, they are all Phra Ngang. It is the pose that dictates the name, rather than him being a separate entity.

People don't know whether Phra Ngang has ever existed. We use him as a representation of the idea of Phra Ngang but having a Phra Ngang can sometimes bring perverted thoughts, even if the devotee has never been that type of person. Some people have reported that Phra Ngang has possessed them, but these are people with a very weak psyche although it can also depend on how the Phra Ngang has been blessed or made. A good Phra Ngang brings great Saneah and invincibility but if the bearer has a

good relationship with his Ngang, he can also bring great fortune and support from their superiors. Phra Ngang rewards dedication and devotion, but if you don't take care of Phra Ngang well, the fortunes can drop as he expects a lot from his followers.

Some Phra Ngang are so strong that they have become legendary. With one Ngang that is known to Ajarn, if he is placed face down on the floor and a lady stands over him, the amulet will flip for him to see up her skirt. There are also many stories of followers becoming scared of the power of their Ngang and if that is the case, either return it to the Ajarn or bury him under a big tree.

This wood Phra Ngang amulet with red gem eyes (p386) has been carved from a sugar palm tree that was struck by lightning, which rendered it a supernatural substance (Athan). The Takrut at the base was written on a woman's body and contains a strong sex kata from Phra Ngang. Inside the carved figure is a Prai and incense ash mixture that was passed on to Ajarn Suea by an old Master. Ajarn also made statue of Phra Ngang from golden Maai Sak wood (p507), which is considered a royal wood, full of Maha Amnat. Underneath it is a piece of Panneng from a female night worker and a collection of Takrut for strong Saneah and sex power, all containing kata related to Phra Ngang. The best way to praise Phra Ngang is to remember that he usually has a ghost in there, so remember that he likes kata and offer food. Sometimes offer him some ladies hair, especially if she is attractive, and he also loves an offering of alcohol, as with all items that contain ghosts.

Phra Ngang - an interview with Ajarn Ting

Phra Ngang is well known for Kong Grapan invincibility, Saneah, Klaew Klaat (avoiding dangers) and Metta. When Ajarn Ting was young, his Uncle used to wear Phra Ngang round the waist in a position where it hung near his cock. He was a bit of a petty thief, and many people tried to shoot him over the years but every time they tried, the gun would jam, or they missed their target. Most people think that Phra Ngang is only good for attraction and Metta but in the Lanna traditions he is also superb for protection, and my Uncle believed that his Ngang saved his life many times. Ajarn Ting likes and collects the very old Ngang from this region, and even though they do not have Prai, they are extraordinary items.

At this point, Ajarn got out a tray of old Phra Ngang and talked about them.

Formerly, Phra Ngang was called Phra Chai, but they are essentially the same thing, and they have been made for centuries in this region. This one in the plastic case is an old Phra Chai that was found when building the railway near to Lampang, and the man who found it could not cope with how strong it is so he gave it to Ajarn for safe keeping. The larger Ngang that is covered in the netted string was given to Ajarn by the relative of a very old man who passed away. They first put the Phra Ngang with the body, but at the funeral service, he asked if he could keep him. The son of the old man



202. Ajarn Ting with two of his graveyard wood Ngangs.
This pair are now in the US.



203. Old Phra Ngang, Phra Chai and Per Stones for grinding Muan Sarn.

then decided to give it to Ajarn despite other relatives wanting to keep it as they believed that it was magically powerful. It had been worn so much that the metal loop at the back had broken and the string was knitted over to be able to wear the Ngang. The smaller Phra Ngang in the string was sold to Ajarn by an old man who was a tough guy when he was younger. This man once fought a lot but got hit on the head with a hammer, and he always believed that his Ngang had stopped him dying when he had a hole in his skull. These old Ngangs only contain sacred earth, with no Prai present, but they are very powerful items.

Phra Ngang and Mae Per are the representation of the ancient belief in the regional sex magic, even though in the past they may not have given them the same names. The stones on the right that are shaped like a doughnut are natural representations of the female sex organs and are called Per or Yoni Stones, and the stone next to them is a Paladkhik (the penis shaped rock). Both of these items have to occur in nature and cannot be cut or shaped. Both of these were found in the jungle and had the hole, but the area around the gap has been shaped because the Paladkhik stone has been used to grind Muan Sarn in the Per Stone. The same stones are also used for making the herbal mixtures in the oils used for Sak Yant tattoos as they add power. These came from Ajarn Ting's deceased brother, and he has not used them for a long time; keeping them to praise and caring for them in memory of his sibling.

Phra Ngang - an interview with Ajarn Apichai

Ajarn Apichai has studied two original Phra Ngang Wicha, with the first one being called Phra See Sara Ngang and the second Wicha is from the Lanna traditions. The first Wicha is for Phra Chai and Phra Ngang; the Lanna Wicha is marked as being exceptionally strong for Kong Grapan. Phra Chai is Cambodian, and either has a bald head or straight crown and robe, but Ngang has a bent crown, for which he is famous.

Phra Ngang is usually for invincibility (Kong Grapan), but nowadays, magical Masters typically use a Phor Per (another form of Ngang) kata to make a Ngang, which brings a substantial amount of sex magic into the amulet. The katas from both regions are quite similar, but the power of Saneah has been added to both as the understanding, and use of Phra Ngang has changed, giving him a force that is similar to a Khun Paen.

There are a few origin stories for Phra Ngang, one of which is where he was originally a poor man who had such Saneah that he could even choose wealthy women for sex, a power which he gained from Shiva himself. Another story about him says that he got everything through phenomenal good luck, but there are so many stories about the origins of Ngang that it is impossible to tell which, if any, is true.

The Cambodian version can either be a type of Payon or strongly Saneah, but with all the Phra Ngang Wicha, the body of Phra Ngang is assembled with the 32 parts of the body magic. Ajarn has the skills to construct the body of Phra Ngang inside an amulet, which is why some of his devotees see Phra Ngang in real life.

With a recent Phra Ngang from Ajarn Apichai, he used Maai Ngiew Dam because it already has a spirit and a power within the wood, very much like Maai Takien. It is an Athan wood, whether it is from the forest or graveyard, but it is always stronger if from a cemetery. Takien wood is regarded as being from a haunted tree and is not grown in the grounds of a house or the temple so has to be sourced from the forest or graveyard. Trees in Thailand are usually classed as either enchanted or haunted, but it is the haunted trees that are used for making magical amulets such as this Ngang.

204. It is a little geeky, but fine Yantra application should always be appreciated. The skills of Ajarn Apichai in applying script are exceptional, especially as there's no room for mistakes, because they cannot be corrected. The photograph opposite is the back of a 16" bronze Phra Chai that Ajarn Apichai has in his Samnak, which is a fantastic bucha but so big that it is very difficult to post.





205. Rarely, a maker will make a pair of bucha to Phra Ngang (here as Phor Per) and Mae Per. This fine example is from the wonderful Ajarn Poon of Ubon.

Mae Per

The introduction to Mae Per comes from the original book on The Thai Occult by Jenx, following which are interviews with a few Ajarns to try and clear up some of the confusion about this deity.

This instantly recognisable figure represents the essence of the female, both in nature and in her magic. She is often described as a Deva who resides on the mountain, implying that she has risen above the realms of the spirit world, the underworld and that of the living. She represents nature itself and the continuation of the world with procreation as we are all born of Mae Per. Bounty emerges from her vagina, and her image is an idea that is prevalent in many of the ancient cultures of the world. In the Thai pantheon her consort is Phra Ngang (and Phra Ngang is part of a group of male deities that include Phor Per, Phor Ngang, Phor Ngat and more), another spirit that has been raised to a Deva and as such, Ajarns say that she requires spiritual merit to raise herself further. From chatting with devotees who buy amulets of Mae Per, they report that she is a highly efficient animist deity that draws a more shamanistic collection of devotees because she is bound to nature itself.

Mae Per is depicted as a seated lady with her legs open, either showing her vagina or holding open her vagina to allow a child to pass while in the act of giving birth. The vagina is the source of her magic; she is creation itself as the female bears the trauma of childbirth, propitiating the continuation of the species. Mae Per is also heavily involved in the act of sex, and all the powers of magic related to the sex act. When in the position of giving birth, she is in great pain but the blood spilt brings forth life. It is the burden she has to bear, repaying her karmic debts from previous incarnations. She is the power of the mother, and her protective qualities emerge during difficult times we all encounter as she allows no one to harm her children. Like all matriarchal powers, she has the strength of thought and decision making capabilities that are unswayed by the testosterone of man, able to be both beneficent and brutal when the situation necessitates.

Information about Mae Per is impossible to find as there are no reference works on her of any sort. The one thing that is known though is that the Wicha for Mae Per is ancient and the makers use this fact to hazard a guess at her age rather than through any legend or myth. Statues of Mae Per are rare as not many have the Wicha, but the Northern Thai Lanna lineages still carry the knowledge. There are few talismans of Mae Per, which is either due to the strength of her image, a lack of understanding of the deity or the Wicha not being easily sourced.

One of her main attributes as a magical invocation is to protect the wearer from black magic, evil entities, ghosts and demons but her magic is four-sided, also assisting with romance, business, safety or conflict. Depending on the lineage of her maker, if her amulet is rubbed on the left side of the body, it evokes Maha Niyom and Maha Lap to attract friendliness and helpfulness

in others, which draws them either to you or your business. If the amulet is rubbed on the front of the body, it evokes Kong Krapan, Maha Ud and Klaew Klaad, which protects you from weapons, accidents and black magic. If her amulet is rubbed on the right side, it evokes Maha Saneah to attract lovers and bestows an ability to charm others of the same or the opposite sex. If the amulet is rubbed on the back of the body, it evokes the power of Maha Amnaj and Chok Laap, enhancing the abilities to win difficult discussions or conflicts with smooth speech and an ability to get through to the most stubborn of people.

Mae Per accepts people of any persuasion and is a loving, kind Mother Deva who keeps her flock together with the skills and protective nature of any matriarch. She is particularly useful as a love charm and works for everyone, men, women, gays and transgender folk, which is unusual for a single Thai deity. Where she has been taken into the Buddhist canon (some monks do make Mae Per amulets), the three gems chant or Namo Dtassa will suffice as a Kata, but other kata used are so old as to be odd. Mae Per is beautiful, wise and loving and it is strange why she is not better known or more accepted here in Thailand. There are no public shrines to her, and it would be great if this changed in the future, maybe with a crowdfunding project to fund a bronze of Mae Per to be put in every city on earth? Her image crosses the boundaries of cultures, race and gender and is enriched as a deity because of that fact.

Mae Per - an interview with Ajarn Suea (*see opposite photo*)

It is typical of the knowledge of Ajarn Suea that he has an origin story for Mae Per, which is a revelation! Ajarn Suea often comes out with gems of information because he is part of an ancient lineage. Pay attention to Ajarn, this is a great interview!

Mae Per is from the legend of a daughter of a female merchant from long ago. Her mother sold sweets but was not very good at it, and she decided to ask Mae Per to see if she would try to sell them to see how she does. In ancient times, a person would sell while sat down on the floor rather than sitting in a shop as they do today. The problem was that Mae Per was always falling asleep, but whenever she woke up, all her sweets would be sold out! Her mother wondered why this kept happening, so she decided to watch her daughter from a distance, and of course, Mae Per fell asleep in no time while sat cross-legged on the floor. A lot of men started to come to buy her sweets once she had fallen asleep, but while bending down to look at the desserts they were also looking at her private parts.

When Mae Per found out from her mother that this was happening, she then started to pretend to fall asleep with her legs open, because her family was doing very well! From this story, the method of selling these sweets became the magic of Mae Per. It is not that lady as an entity; it is the magic of sexual attraction to sell something which embodies all Mae Per amulets and statues.





206. Two incredible Mae Per from bone by Luang Phor Pina, circa 1990.

From Ajarn Suea's Wicha, the best way to make a Mae Per talisman is to use the bone of a female who died in an accident, and he also has to know the behaviour of that woman before she died. She had to be recognised for enjoying men and having many lovers, which makes her perfect for a Mae Per. When creating a Mae Per, Ajarn Suea cannot force the spirit to be there; it has to be requested to help and persuaded to reside in exchange of the bargain made where the person who has her talisman will make merit for her. This type of spirit comes from a severe accident or a suicide (Phi Tai Hong), and they need help with balancing their sins in life with merit. If this is done correctly, they can be a rewarding amulet. To select the best spirit, Ajarn tosses coins to check what the spirit wants, and whether that spirit is the best choice for a Mae Per. If it doesn't work out, time has to be taken to find another good source to make this style of talisman and the other bone will be used for something else.

Besides the bone content, Wahn is added that will boost the Saneah for the mixture - Wahn Dok Thong, Wahn Sowlong, Krua Khaw Long and many more strong Saneah plants. To make a Mae Per statue, it is best to use one of the woods for love such as Maai Rak or Maai Yom, but they are difficult to post from Thailand now because of her image. Mae Per is usually for females for sexual attraction, but males can use her also because she is also great for selling and trading. The kata for Ajarn's Mae Per is purely for Saneah, but if a man had this, he would not say the kata as then better for trade and business. Mae Per has a spirit in it, so it enjoys offerings of women's clothing, makeup, food every day, and here, the owner should always feed themselves first before feeding the spirit, or it raises them above the living. The devotee has to have the power to be above them, so they eat first, then the ghost gets fed after, which is the case with all spirit amulets. On the Buddhist days, Ajarn also offers Mae Per a raw egg, cracked into a dish.

Nang Yaem - an Interview with Ajarn Khaw

This amulet is the same as Mae Per, but Ajarn changed the name because he didn't want people to feel the same as they would with a Mae Per, he wanted to refresh their beliefs and attitude towards her. He hopes that devotees can find a new understanding of this old female deity, which Ajarn Khaw thinks works well both for the person wearing it and for the deity herself. Many Masters make Mae Per, but only Ajarn makes Nang Yaem, which can bring new people to this deity and help them trust that what Ajarn Khaw makes is effective magic. It is just another way to change talismans and make them more recognisable, a form of constant development designed to pull more people into magic.

The image of Nang Yaem, like Mae Per is bold, strong and confident and the skulls under her mean that the amulet has a spirit from the Nam Man Prai on the back, as well as the bone inside. The bone for the Nang Yaem had to be female, and this bone is from a lady of the night, which works well for this talisman. It also suits the attributes of this Nang Yaem as it is for love

and for charm, a special charming enchantment that only a lady of the night can bring. Some people like the image on this amulet but some people are scared of it, although it has to be said that people are attracted to what they are meant to have in their lives.

There are many stories about Mae Per, and she is linked to Phra Ngang. Ajarn used to hear their names a lot when he was a little boy, and the people around him wore them. They believed that they were a couple, and while there are many stories about them, he doesn't know which ones are true. They are legends, and then the myths develop over the generations. He sees Phra Ngang and Mae Per as representing the original Yin Yang of Thai magic (like Shiva and Uma). The one thing Ajarn is sure of is the age of the Wicha, it is ancient; surmised from the kata used for both its construction and praise. That is the best indication as to the origins as far as he is concerned, and it is the same with Inn Khoo, and also Nam Man Prai. Old, old magic. This amulet has to be made in one day, constructed in the cemetery during the daytime and then blessed in the same place on the same night, a night chosen through astrological calculations.

Ajarn Khaw sees Nang Yaem/Mae Per as very beautiful; a raw and magnificent female force.

Mae Per - an interview with Ajarn James

Ajarn James has made two fantastic Mae Per amulets, one made from bone and one from the pitch black wood, Maai Ngiew Dam. They both feel like a very deep lake that is unfathomable, which is a feeling that devotees often look for in a good Mae Per.

The Mae Per of the Lanna region comes from a Wicha of sex magic that is remarkably similar to the one for Maa Saep Nang, but the actual history of Mae Per is lost in the mists of time. Ajarn's teachers have instructed him to believe that these amulets are for ladies, and to make them using natural substances is the best way. Ngiew Dam is the best wood to use for these, and his other version was made from the jaw bone of an elephant. Ngiew Dam is often referred to as a 'high' wood as it has a guardian spirit within, which is the same for the elephant bone. Sometimes he uses the wood that has died in a graveyard, which is of use because it adds supernatural qualities.

Under the base is a cavity for the spiritual load, which in this case is made from the earth from a graveyard and a bone powder from a lady who died in an accident on a Saturday and was cremated on a Tuesday. There are no Wahn plants in this mixture, no herbs or organic materials, which is typical of very old Wicha. Mae Per works very well for ladies of the night but less so for business women as she is not for trade. Mae Per offers strong Metta and Maha Saneah but for men, it is best to wear a Phra Ngang, but they can strike a balance in life by wearing both, should they feel the need.



207. Bone and Ngiew Dam wood Mae Per amulets in the hand of Ajarn James.



*208. Put quite simply, this is the finest Mae Per amulets that has been made in recent years. It has been carved from Takien wood, set into a Prai oil and is sat on a piece of Panneng that came from a prostitute.
Made by Ajarn Perm Rung.*

Mae Per - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

The legend of Mae Per states that she was a beautiful lady who sold produce in the market and one day she fell asleep, but on this day her legs were open. The men who were on the market started to come and try to look at her private parts, while she was asleep. When she woke up the men then pretended to be buying from her stall. Mae Per's mother saw this and thought it a good idea for her to pretend to sleep with her legs open as it improved sales. Mae Per is not a mythical being; her legend originates from the story of one particular strategy to sell things. She is not a ghost or spirit; it is only a story about a lady who could use her looks, and her body to influence others with business. Ajarn thinks that the history of Mae Per is different in the different regions, but they all amount to a similar story about a lady who sold things well, despite what someone may think about her methods (*laughter*).

Generally, a Mae Per talisman does not contain Prai, but some makers use Prai to boost her power by getting help from a spirit. In Cambodia, they sometimes use the birthday of the person who will praise Mer Per and place that within the Wicha of creation. No matter whether the amulet contains Prai, a Mae Per is always for Metta, Saneah and Chok Laap as charm and attraction added to good fortune is the best help for business.

In the past, Ajarn used to carve a Mae Per from Takien wood, and to give it more power he would use the ashes from a dead pregnant lady, or from the body of a suicide victim. If he didn't want to make a Mae Per Prai talisman, he would use Star Gooseberry wood or the wood from the Jackfruit tree to make her image, and then create the magic using Puttakhun techniques. Mae Per is becoming more popular, so he now makes both versions of this type of amulet to satisfy the devotees who don't want a ghost with their Mae Per.

Some people think that Phra Ngang and Mae Per go together and they carry both, but the correct way is that men use a Phra Ngang and women use Mae Per. Mae Per is used by a lady because she is carrying an amulet that makes men go to her, because they are attracted by her legs being open and she is ready for them to penetrate her.

To praise Ajarn Rung's Mae Per, please offer things that a lady would enjoy like perfume, makeup or flowers. His Prai version has female Panneng or ashes and the spirit would enjoy those offerings as well as a bowl of rice for food, and rice wine. The Puttakhun version has the same offerings although the devotee would leave out the rice wine, but with both versions, lots of kata. In the past when they used ashes or Panneng for a Mae Per they would also choose a woman's ashes that depended on her behaviour when she was alive, but that is now very difficult to find, so we pursue the remains of a woman who died an unnatural death. It is also important to pick the right day to collect the bones as there is an astrological imperative within the Wicha.

The Prai Krasip

The imagery of the Prai Krasip makes them both attractive and accessible to the modern tastes, through the use of a skull to portray the presence of this ghost. This ghost is considered to be a very stable entity that establishes a bond with the bearer and acts as a warning system for approaching luck, problems or danger. The other name these are known by is 'The Whispering Ghost' because of the way he works, the spirit whispers to you, not in the ear but in the mind. ¹

It is thought essential with these amulets that the bearer recites the kata for the Prai Krasip often as this helps both calm the mind and open the connection with the spirit. Most people's minds are too busy to hear anything outside their mental chatter, and the meditative practice of reciting kata can open the gateway necessary to listen to the ghost. The whisper is heard in the back of the brain, and comes when least expected. The whispering of the Prai Krasip is not a conversation, and their murmurs are said to be short and succinct, often heard between breaths when there could be a pause in the personal dialogue. ²

Due to the nature of this ghost, it is also recommended to further calm the mind with some meditation through the chanting of one of the classic kata's in the Thai Buddhist practices - Namo Dtassa, which is astonishingly beautiful and repeated in a rhythmic fashion with circular breathing. There are recordings of this famous Kata online that can be followed until it becomes second nature. Starting with three repetitions until a familiarity is built with the language, it can then be extended to 9 and following that, 108, to build Samathi. Ajarn Khaw said that if the chatter pulls the devotee away from the pure focus while reciting kata, one should start again from the beginning until all 108 are said with a clear mind, which can take time.

Namo Dtassa Pagawadtoe Aharadtoe Samaa Sam Phutta Sa

The amulets themselves (this type of ghost is normally only present in amulets, with very few statues made) typically represent the Prai Krasip in his usual form as a skull. The eyes are often picked out using red gems, denoting his ability to see into the future realms, keeping an eye on what approaches and warning the bearer to be careful when a time is coming that necessitates caution. Having the red eyes is by no means essential though, and highly effective Prai Krasip are made without these. What is crucial in the amulets are the correct Prai materials, usually in the form of a bone chip in the back. The bone gives the ghost something to bind to, that it recognises as once being part of its living body. The Wicha for these amulets is thought ancient by the makers ³ but as is usual with this predominantly oral lineage, there is zero historical evidence for this talisman.

Another reason that these are the perfect entry point into the Thai Occult is that the ghost is calm and obedient, like a spiritual servant, but it is the imagery of the Prai Krasip that attracts most. Working to find the whispers



209. A magnificent Prai Krasip from Ajarn Nahn Khong.

is also very important as it helps the devotee make an effort to clear the mind, which is beneficial with all aspects of this occult art. To help make the connection to Prai Krasip, try chanting the kata while looking into his eyes (and yes, the ghost is always male), it speeds up the process in making him a very useful asset in life 4.

A man in the US acquired one of Luang Ta Naen's superb Prai Krasip's and then sent an email a week or so later with the title '*This amulet is fucking awesome!*' so it looked like there was a good tale to read. He reported that the day after its arrival the amulet woke him up because his house was being robbed and he managed to chase the thieves away. In the same week, he also won a court case that he expected to lose and that would have cost him a lot of money, all because a whisper from the amulet that told him how to proceed. He now holds this amulet very dear.

Many people write to relay the stories that come from having this type of amulet, rendered more effective through being cared for by the bearer in the correct way to enable the bond between them to be strong.

1. Suksit Magazine, February 2013.
2. Barang discussion group, Singapore.
3. Ajarn Chalerm, January 2016
4. The dealer for Luang Ta Naen amulets, January, 2016

The Prai Krasip - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

Krasip in Thai means 'a whisper', so the Prai Krasip amulet is there to help the bearer hear a whisper to warn you about dangers ahead, to issue warnings to be cautious. Whispers can also be heard from items like Kuman Thong but with them they can also be full conversations (*laughter*), whereas the Prai Krasip is a quiet whisper, not chatting all the time. If a foreigner has a Prai Krasip amulet, Ajarn has been asked before as to whether they will be able to understand each other but Prai Krasip have their own ways to inform you. They may still be able to speak of the danger as language is often no barrier to ghosts, or they will find a way to make you sense something to help you avoid the perceived danger.

The Prai Krasip is not only found in an amulet, and there are other forms of whispering ghosts. Sometimes a Guardian Spirit of a haunted place can warn you of something, and in that case, they are also a Prai Krasip. The whispers can also be from your own Guardian Spirit (the Opatika), and the practice of having spirit amulets to listen to can assist with gaining the help of the spirits that are present at all times.

The Prai Krasip is made in every region of Thailand, but each Wicha creates them using different materials in a different way, although they all have a similar effect. The Prai Krasip is always portrayed as a skull and is usually made from a mixture of bone powder and Muan Sarn. For a foreigner who wants to start with praising or collecting Prai, it is best to start off with items that are weaker in power with mixtures of bone rather than pieces of skull. If they start with a strong Prai amulet and are a weak minded person, the spirit might overpower their fortune and cause bad luck because they know that the person does not have control over them. Sometimes they can even change the bearer into a moody person and make them bad tempered, which may not be their normal character. It is best to start with something that has more Puttakhun magic than Prai magic at first, and then work from that point.

210. A pile of Prai Krasip in both bone and metal.





211. **Rahu is here!** This incredible example of a Rahu galaa is from Ajarn Khaw that was made on the best night to make a Rahu for 20 years. The interview with Ajarn about this mysterious deity is over the page.



212. A fine, large Rahu Pha Yant that was consecrated on the night of the super moon at the end of January, 2018.

Rahu - An Interview with Ajarn Khaw

It is considered extremely difficult to contact the higher gods, but Rahu is a little easier as he can be regarded as being half god and half devil. Many people have a period in life where their luck is bad, business is terrible, and there are many problems; then this is the time to pray to Rahu to clear away the negative elements in life and bring better things.

Ajarn Khaw makes Rahu using coconut shell (galaa), but it has to be the special coconut with one eye, which is supernaturally potent and there are also no eye coconut; an item that is even more special. The no eye coconut is known as Galaa Maha Ut, and both of these types occur as a freak of nature, no actual tree produces this type of coconut. There are no legends or stories about the origin of the use of the one eye coconut, but maybe they have been forgotten as the use of these is ancient. Galaa can be used for many types of amulet but the most popular is for Rahu as the galaa looks like the moon but this is Rahu magic, not moon magic (although Ajarn adds later that making amulets on a full moon is good for charm).

Rahu talismans can be blessed and made at any time, but if it is a full moon, it is better. If there is an eclipse of the moon, it is best and the combination of the two is fantastic. There is a very special day coming at the end of January (2018) where there is a full moon, an eclipse AND it is on a Wednesday, which in Thailand is regarded as Rahu's day. An alignment such as this is the best combination for 20 years, and Ajarn Khaw is making some special Rahu amulets from galaa on that day, performing the consecration with Kruba Insom and Kruba Win. These will be fantastic for Serm Duang, the cleaning of the lines of fate and removing bad luck. Ajarn Khaw wholeheartedly believes in Rahu and considers him very special. He wears one that was made by his Master that he values so dearly that he had it cased in pure gold.

The second part of this interview.

The ritual held on January 31st, 2018 for Rahu was very special indeed, and many people made offerings to Rahu on that day. Rahu is considered to be a demon in the Hindu beliefs, and many people will act to 'close' their shrines, covering them to protect them from the influence of Rahu and therefore, this ritual was held outdoors and in the moonlight. Rahu cannot be forced into the galaa amulets as he is a god, so all the Masters present prayed with good mantra and asked him to come. Some powerful monks helped at the ritual but they chanted to the Buddha, not to Rahu, and the night started with Chinese fireworks to scare away any negative elements. Ajarn Khaw was the one inviting Rahu, and he repeated his mantra over 108 times, which took almost two hours while being fully immersed in Samathi.

During this consecration, he also blessed some Pha Yant to Rahu. On this cloth, there are two kata, one to the left side and one to the right. There are two different kata present because one is for a Rahu that eats the sun and

one is for a Rahu that eats the moon.

The kata for Rahu Eats the Sun.

Ya Taa Tang Tang

Ya Ma Ma Wa

Tang Ma Ma Tang

Kaa Kaa Sae Tang

The Kata for Rahu Eats the Moon, which is the more common type

Ku Sae Toe

Toe Moe Ma Ma Laa

Laa Ma Ma Moe

Toe Tidt Kut Hee

These kata can be used when praising Rahu, and both types of Rahu are praised in the same way, with the same offerings, but one is praised specifically on a lunar eclipse and one on a solar eclipse (the eclipse can be full or partial). While creating these Rahu, Ajarn also took the opportunity to help some of his devotees on this highly auspicious day by holding a ritual for them to persuade Rahu to change their fate and raise their fortunes. It is good practice for an Ajarn to help people at the best time to do so.

Rahu is always offered black food, and in the Thai traditions there are eight types, which include black chicken, black eggs, black coffee, anything black, but there is no significance to each food, all the black foods are considered the same to Rahu, the devotee can use what they want. They can also offer to Rahu at any time if they feel like they need a change of luck. Ajarn Khaw recommends Rahu to people who are going through difficult times, and this happens because Rahu the devil has entered their life. If Rahu has entered their lives already the person must wear Rahu, respect Rahu and praise him and he will give his blessings to turn their life around.

Rahu - An interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

Rahu is considered to be a very powerful god, but he once upset the Sun god in Hindu mythology by stealing the water for immortality and drinking it. When the Sun god found out, he hunted him down and cut him in half. In the Indian legends they usually say that he cut the head off Rahu but in the Thai beliefs, he kept his arms, although, of course, he could not die after drinking the water and was left to float around in space. Whenever he sees the Sun god he will try to swallow him but as he was cut in half, the Sun god always escapes, which is the same as when he eats the moon, and each of these three are considered to be siblings. Rahu is the youngest of these siblings, who were once mortal men and when they offered food to monks, Rahu always used a galaa as a bowl, which matched his black colour. So, Rahu and the moon and sun gods are just like brothers arguing, with Rahu always trying to consume them.



213. Consecrating Rahu Talismans with
Ajarn Khaw and Kruba Insom on the
night of the supermoon, January 2018.





214. The front and back of galaa amulets to Rahu made by Ajarn Khaw on the night of the supermoon. Ajarn considered this such an important event that his name and the date are on the amulets.



215. Because of it being supernatural in nature, Galaa can be used in many ways. Over the past few years the author has seen them used for amulets to Pujow Samingprai, Nang Prai and other Lersi, but never like this. This is a carved Galaa from Luang Phor Pina from around 1990.



Most of the amulets to Rahu show him swallowing the moon as this is a more common event, and he can be worshipped more often in this role. There are some talismans made that show him swallowing the sun, but they use a different kata, and with both of them there are rituals to be made during the 7 phases of an eclipse. The one-eyed coconut (galaa) is the best material used for a Rahu because it represents the mouth of Rahu and once good fortune goes into the galaa, it is difficult for it to escape. The galaa is also like the shape of the moon, and the galaa is considered to be strongly supernatural in nature. Most galaa are made into Rahu Om Jan (Rahu eats the moon), but if made into a Rahu Om Phra Aathit, the only difference will be the kata carved into the coconut.

The people most likely to have a Rahu is the man because it helps with authority, especially for those working to serve the public through government offices and the armed forces. If a man is a farmer, Rahu will help with the harvest, and if the man is in business, he helps with wealth. Rahu also protects against ghosts and dark magic and while Ajarn did not say that a woman should not have Rahu, most of the people who bucha Rahu in Thailand are male because males are more likely to be in the Police, Army and government services. The primary attribute he bestows for everyone is Serm Duang, a change of the fortunes of the worshipper and many people come to Rahu after a period of bad luck. He is an active and useful god.

It is OK to bucha Rahu every day, and offer food in the same way as a normal amulet, but when there is a lunar eclipse, the Rahu should be taken out to bathe in the moonlight, which boosts the power of Rahu. For an eclipse of the sun, where a person has a Rahu Sun talisman, all the offerings need to come in sixes, six grapes, six incense etc., it can be three different types of food, but there has to be six pieces of each offering. For the Rahu moon talisman, during an eclipse, it has to be 15 food offerings and as with the Rahu Sun talisman, all the offerings have to be black, including the incense sticks. The offerings can also include flowers, but they have to be black too, coffee is fine, even coca cola, all fine as long as black.

At the end of the interview the question was posed concerning the rarity of one eye galaa in nature, and Ajarn Rung guessed at around 4 or 5 per 10,000 coconuts. For no eyed coconuts (Galaa Maha Ut), Ajarn thought it would be 1 or 2 per 10,000 coconuts, and for an albino galaa (white galaa), they are one in a million.

A similar question to other Ajarns brought various answers, but as one Ajarn said, 'Having not counted them, it is difficult to be sure'.

216. Opposite. Ajarn Perm Rung with his fine Rahu Galaa.

Hoon Payon (also spelt Hun Payont, Hoon Pa Yon etc)

The Hoon Payon (Robot Ghost) is generally considered to be a spirit amulet that is closely associated with the land, arising first in the agricultural heartlands of Thailand, and the roots of Thai culture. The action of creating a doll from various materials to perform a magical purpose is part of most of the world's magical traditions. From the little historical evidence available, this is an ancient spirit that has been used for many millennia to protect both the person and the home, while also bringing good fortune to the bearer. Hoon Payon (or in this case, Hun Phi) are mentioned in the tale of Khun Paen 1, where he made a thousand Hun Phi soldiers help fight one of his wars

He cut grass, tied it into 1,000 dummies, scattered enchanted rice and the dummies came alive as people, with weapons in hand, filling the forest with noise and movement.

...and he gave orders to his army of mantra dummies "You will march as an army into battle... Only round up people and hit them, don't kill." 2

There are even stories of battles between these spirit dummies and how Khun Paen subdued the opposing dummies with enchantment 3. There's even an account of them fighting each other in battle!

Dummy attacked dummy, stabbing and parrying, pushing and pulling, clashing pike against pike, wrestling hand to hand in an uproar. 4

The practice of making Hoon Payon originates from the Khmer/Thai Saiyasart traditions, and it is considered to be a problematic Wicha 5. A Hoon Payon serves to assist the bearer in various tasks and improve conditions in life, which has directly led to its popularity in the rural areas because these talismans are cheaply constructed. The first popular maker of this effigy found fame with his work as Thailand started to become a wealthier country, and the people could afford to buy protective figures of this type rather than them being made by the local magician for a pittance. This maker was Ajarn Loy, and his Hoon Payon are now a valued item to both collectors and the elite classes. Ajarn Loy's lineage is still active today and their Hoon Payon are sought after for their effectiveness, although many makers hold the Wicha to make superb Hoon Payon.

They are made from a multitude of materials, but traditionally, the maker used agricultural materials (particularly grasses, including one called Yaa Kaa, which is used for roof laying and it is often cut from a cemetery for a Hoon Payon), soil, metal, wood or bamboo that has been made into the shape of a person and bound with 'Sai Sin' ceremonial thread 6. This thread is used when a monk or Ajarn cordons off an area for protection while he performs a ritual, as well as the thread used during funeral rites. If more clout is needed for the talisman, the maker will use the Sai Sin from a funeral as it is considered to be Prai in nature, added to both increase the power to the item and to bind the spirit in the effigy.



217. A magnificent 8 armed Hoon Payon with weapons from the talented maker, Phra Ajarn Supasit.



218. A woven Hoon Payon by Ajarn Perm Rung.

While being able to attract luck and wealth, the primary role of the Hoon Payon is to block out danger and misfortune, acting as a substitute body that is attacked instead of the bearer ⁷. According to one famous maker, a Hoon Payon amulet or figure may suddenly break, and it is said to have taken a 'hit' in the course of its duties. It is also known to protect from black magic and evil spirits, and by blocking out these disruptive forces it allows boon to come to the person or the home ⁸. The Hoon Payon is an obedient assistant that is ready to act in defence of the wearer, akin to a magical bodyguard.

There are many types and styles of this effigy, which often reflect the strength or intended purpose of the Hoon Payon itself. Ajarn Loy's classic talismans are made from woven wire and generally carry a weapon, enabling the Hoon Payon to be efficient in its protection. More modern makers depict it with 4, 6 or even 8 arms, all carrying weapons in the manner of some of the Hindu deities. This variation of styles has enabled the makers to allow their artistry to come through, and now the Hoon Payon can be seen depicted as a Muay Thai fighter, a soldier, a general or even the angel of death. The colour of the Sai Sin thread that often binds the body is said to denote the intended strengths of that particular effigy. Black protects against black magic, red protects the person from intended physical attack and white protects the home and wealth, but actually, this all depends on the intent and the lineage of the maker.

While most Hoon Payon contain only the spirit in question, this is often bolstered by the addition of Prai materials, particularly bone or Nam Man Prai oil to make a Prai Payon or Hoon Payon Prai. These amulets are often shown with the head of a skull to denote the Prai present, and they are a potent defence. They can also be made containing coffin nails, corpse hair, cemetery earths, metal pieces from a city gate or Wat, and even pieces of dried skin or flesh. These dolls are not empty shells or mnemonic devices. ⁹

The perceived advice about wearing a Hoon Payon as an amulet is that the bearer should feel the envelopment of its protective powers, something which needs adjusting to over time to find comfort in this feeling. It alters the way people see and interact with the bearer, a change which should be understood and accepted by the owner and not abused. It offers the chance for spiritual growth as an individual and the opportunity should not be missed. There are many styles of kata used from the various lineages with some using ancient language and invocations. Others evoke the primary elements in expanding the effectiveness of the Hoon Payon and beseech its presence to care for and help the bearer.

When bringing a Hoon Payon into the house, the correct practice is to make an offering of incense and pray to the spirits of the land, informing them that the Hoon Payon is another welcome member of the family. The effigy enjoys kata, and like all the ancient spirits or deities he also enjoys alcohol, either in a glass, dabbed onto it by a finger or sprayed on with an atomiser. Do not do this too often though, it is a treat, like a periodic night on the town.

1. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p316
2. p1034
3. p1049
4. p1051
5. p943
6. Saksit magazine, August 2015.
7. Saksit magazine, August 2015
8. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* p1175
9. ditto

The Hoon Payon - An Interview With Ajarn Apichai

Interviewing Ajarn Apichai is a joy as he knows exactly how much to say, but this does not mean that he understands the effect of interviews, it is just how he is. For example, after the release of the Sak Yant book as part of this series of works, he was booked to work at an amulet shop in Singapore to perform Sak Yant and blessings. When he got there, he happened to mention to the owner about being featured in a new book, and was admonished for not telling him sooner! Ajarn then requested both a pdf of his interviews and the author's last copy of the book to help with marketing. Ajarn Apichai is a genuine person, he has no guile and is trying to help people understand more about the Thai Occult.

There are two types of Hoon Payon.

The first type is the Hoon Payon Taep, a Hoon Payon Angel and therefore, no Prai materials are present. The Hoon Payon Taep is made by using the kata for the four elements and the 32 parts of the body kata to create a new and pure entity, on to which is cast a strong spell for protection.

The second type is a Hoon Payon Phi, which is constructed by putting a ghost into the effigy. When making this type of Hoon Payon, Ajarn has to use haunted items, such as soil from graveyards and bone, which will be embedded into the doll. The making of these is quite similar to the making of a Kuman Thong, but the spirit in a Hoon Payon Phi is an adult rather than a child. There is a specific protection spell used for the Hoon Payon Phi that is extremely effective against vicious spirits and being attacked by black magic. To make this talisman is more difficult than making a Kuman Thong as the Hoon Payon created has to act as the owners double, meaning that any bad things that may come to the owner are passed on to the doll instead. The important thing when making a Hoon Payon is the kata, which is the kata for Phra Karn, the god of destruction.

In the past, the Hoon Payon was also made in the shape of a buffalo or bull, which is again used for protection and to cause harm to an enemy. The old human shaped effigies had no face in the belief that when it attacks an enemy, it can remain anonymous. The history of the making of these items dates back thousands of years and was made using grass or clay to make a doll. In modern times a face started to be added, but only for aesthetic



219. Ajarn Apichai weaving a Hoon Payon from wire.



220. This huge Hoon Payon protects the Samnak of Ajarn Perm Rung.

reasons. It is impossible to say where this Wicha originated as each region makes these useful talismans, and while there are variations in the way they are constructed, these variations are small.

It is easy to mark the resurgence of the making of these items as one maker restored their popularity, Ajarn Loy, who had great knowledge about the construction of the Hoon Payon. Ajarn Loy's pieces became renowned for being highly effective, and he made them using woven wire or bamboo. Ajarn Apichai has been studying his method and has constructed some small pieces by hand, chanting kata while bending the wire into shape, which he says is a highly enjoyable process. His Hoon Payon are all Taep style and have a particular kata called the heart kata of 56 hearts, which is then combined with the elemental kata's for earth, air, wind and fire.

Watching Ajarn making the small wire figure in the photograph was a study in Samathi itself. It took hours!

***The Hoon Payon* - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung**

The Hoon Payon acts like a soldier or guardian to protect the person and their property. There are two types of Hoon Payon, Prai and Taep, but Ajarn only makes Hoon Payon Prai, because they are more effective. An Ajarn usually uses a male ghost for the Hoon Payon, and it is often made using coffin nails, ashes, shroud, 7 graveyard soils, the soils from 7 ant hills and other items too numerous to mention. In the past, the Hoon Payon was used for fighting in a war against all enemies, and some were made with human flesh to bolster their powers, quite different from those made today. During times of strife the magicians will pull on the strongest sources available to ensure success, but in today's world, these methods are considered too extreme. The modern Hoon Payon is an adaptation of an ancient form of magic that remains popular to this day.

Ajarn himself uses a large Hoon Payon to protect his home against black magic attack. They are made both in Thailand and in Cambodia, but the Cambodian ones are often more powerful because they use the remains of a Phi Tai Hong Ghost. Some also use Panneng or flesh to make a Hoon Payon, but it is now difficult to find the materials, and therefore, this type is presently rarely seen. There is always the question posed as to whether Thai magic or Cambodian magic is stronger? Ajarn believes that the Thai version is stronger because more people believe in it, whereas in many regions of Cambodia, it is now hazardous to be a magician. He thinks that the original Wicha of the Hoon Payon may have been Cambodian, but the Cambodians have lost their faith in such matters now and belief is a potent force in all magical systems.

To Bucha a Hoon Payon Prai, offerings such as boiled eggs, rice, alcohol and cigarettes should often be given, but for the Taep type, it is usually just rice, eggs and cigarettes. Raw pork can also be offered to a Prai version, but never to the Taep. Ajarn Perm Rung believes that this type of spirit is extremely effective and places great faith in their abilities.

The Inn Khoo

The act of love can be considered magical in itself and magicians from all the ancient cultures have sought to assist in the pursuit of love, partnership and sex since society took shape. In Thailand, the general Maha Saneah amulet helps to attract a partner, create friendships and gives a boost to working relationships (and virtually all the amulet types have Maha Saneah) but the Inn Khoo is the specific incantation to attract a partner and build a loving relationship.

The traditional representation of the Inn Khoo is the loving couple, bound in an embrace for eternity, but in the last few years many highly sexual versions have appeared, reflecting both a liberalisation of the Thai conservative nature and more active marketing. The Inn Khoo is considered to represent the power of duality (we are all stronger and balanced when together) through the binding of the male and female, the strong and the gentle, the seed and the yoni, and in this manner evoke the principles of Yin and Yang. The Inn Khoo aims to give the bearer balance through being with a partner and benefitting from the gentle reforming of life through one lived with the guiding force of love and friendship. These can be either Prai based or non-Prai, but the Prai ones are more active, which is generally the case with all amulet styles. Inn Khoo Prai come in many forms, and the Prai can also be represented by a coffin nail, with a classic version of this amulet being one with two figures wrapped around the nail. The Prai can even come as bone, corpse hair and Nam Man Prai oils, lending an effectiveness that one should expect with a love charm.

While the effect of an Inn Khoo can be significant, in general, they only serve to give the bearer an advantage with the object of their desires, they do not force or capture. Kruba Porn stated that with his Inn Khoo, it works the best with the first object of desire, but does continue to influence after that. The Inn Khoo is one of the oldest types of charm, spell or amulet that developed from an ancient practice that involved burying an Inn Khoo where someone slept ¹. The old Inn Khoo was strongly Prai, helping to bewitch visitors and attract a suitor to 'home ground' as it were. There's also historical evidence for Inn Khoo with Prai materials. According to an old death custom, during the ceremonies before a cremation the face of a corpse was covered with beeswax, around half an inch thick to disguise any degradation and if the family was wealthy, gold leaf might also be added to beautify ². The mask would be taken off before cremation, and the beeswax could then be used by the spirit doctors (Mhor Phi) as a powerful Prai ingredient due to it absorbing some of the oils of the dead. This beeswax from the face would then be mixed with ash from a cremation, sacred earths and potent herbs and moulded into two figures, one of them often bearing the name of the one who wants to attract, and the person pursued on the other. The figures would then be bound together using the thread that tied the hands of a corpse, and the figure was buried under where the person slept. Within a day, the person desired would come ³.

There is also historical evidence that states that they originally mixed the ingredients for an Inn Khoo in the bowl of a skull, which would certainly add potency 4.

Whether the Inn Khoo was worn around the neck or on the body in ancient times is not known. Many of the newer styles of Maha Saneah amulets and statues are now more popular than this old type (there is a definite fashion aspect to many of these types, some come into style while others drift out) but the Inn Khoo is still famous as an evocation, often present in the items on the rear of the amulet or under a statue. The Inn Khoo is also commonly used as extra power in a See Pung balm for Maha Saneah, with a small brass figure of the loving couple pressed into the magically active cream. The See Pung is another ancient device for enchantment that is usually put onto the lips, and is a combination of beeswax, coconut milk and various herbs for Maha Saneah but more on that in a later chapter.

1. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p287

2. p992

3. Berend Jan Terwiel - *Monks and Magic* - p72

4. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p1063

***The Inn Khoo* - An Interview with Ajarn Khaw**

The Inn Khoo is a traditional Lanna amulet, and Ajarn makes two kinds for appealing to different people. A red one that is a spirit Inn Khoo that includes bone chips, Sai Sin from a corpse and herb powder. The Inn Khoo locket has just the herb powder, the same powder but no Prai. The magic is the same, but the spirit amulet of two people hugging has more power to achieve the aims of the Wicha.

Inn Khoo means 'man and woman together', sit together, hug each other, and there are also sex images used for Inn Khoo, but the magic is the same. The power comes from the ingredients and the correct Wicha. The Akhara on the locket is a kata but not an Inn Khoo kata; it is a kata for charm. The back has some Saneah oil, a gold and silver Inn Khoo and 7 Takrut on this Master version, which are not all the same. It has 7 kinds of charming magic in the amulet for the attraction of love.

The Wicha is old Lanna, which is different from say the Isaan Wicha, and Ajarn Khaw thinks that the Lanna is the original, but who knows for sure. If anyone goes to the amulet markets, they will see old Inn Khoo, which are usually either in copper or made from wood like Maai Rak or Maai Mayom, two popular kinds of wood for love attraction. They were also made in stone, and those are very old. Silver is also used, but mainly to express the wealth of the bearer and this is the same with the copper versions of old, it showed they were rich and had status. In modern times there are Ong Kru versions that the Master spends more time on and therefore, charges more for them, for the people who have more money for talismans.

The Inn Khoo - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

Ajarn cannot postulate on the history of the knowledge of the Inn Khoo because there are many versions of this Wicha, which includes those from the Lanna regions and Burma. One of the most famous people in this region regarding Inn Khoo was Kruba Taa, and his were one of the best Saneah amulets ever made by Lanna magicians. With a real Inn Khoo, they would use the names and birthdays of two people and put them into dolls before tying them together. These were made for a person who adored someone, to make that union happen. It is like the Wicha for a one-sided love to bring them together, and then the doll was buried in the graveyard during a particular ritual, which used alcohol, blood and meat in a similar way to most graveyard work. These products are offered to the chosen spirit for its help in binding the two people together in love.

The Inn Khoo is one of the most popular Saneah amulets in the Lanna region. When a couple feels that their love is drifting, or they have lost their deep connection, they will often have an Inn Khoo made to bind them back together. The couple will put their names onto a prepared gold and silver Takrut, which are then placed into two dolls that are tied together to increase their love. This bespoke ritual is for people who visit Ajarn's Samnak to give the details and some personal items, but for many people this is difficult. For people who cannot come to the Samnak, an amulet can also be used and carried around. Ajarn's Inn Khoo amulet is made from Sai Sin magical thread that has been wound into dolls and had a Takrut placed inside; excellent for Saneah and Metta, two essential elements in finding a life partner or someone just for sex.

221. The beautiful Inn Khoo recently produced by Ajarn Perm Rung.





222. A Lanna Inn Khoo spell that is in the special edition of this book.
 Made by Ajarn Apichai (description over the page).



223. According to the Wicha, for these to be effective, the Yant has to be drawn on a ladies private parts. This action means that Ajarn's Samathi has to be strong to accomplish the task.

The Inn Khoo Yant - the special edition extra by Ajarn Apichai

On the metal sheet is the Lanna version of the Inn Khoo, which carries an image of a man and woman in an embrace. The Inn Khoo is a symbol of fertility. The male has the name of Kham, and the woman is called Kaew, and the ancient version of the Inn Khoo was often called Inn Kaew, Inn Kham. They were also referred to as Inn Ngun and Inn Thong, which translates as the silver and gold couple. In the Lanna region, these were the first man and woman that brought about life, which relates it directly to Adam and Eve in the West. The Inn Khoo is the original representation of the father and mother of all of us but as times changed, this belief was made into a Yant, and sex magic was added to give Metta, Maha Saneah, Originally, the Inn Khoo was for love but over time it became more about sex and frivolity, although it also protects from black magic. The original image for the Inn Khoo was not as lewd as it is now with the figures often being clothed. Old people have the Inn Khoo in their homes to bring love to their abode, which is a more ancient belief than the modern day sex images.

This Yant follows the modern belief and it draws people into wanting sex with the bearer of this Yant, and the spell in this piece will break any restrictions they may have towards the physicality of sex.

The kata for the special Yant on metal

*Om Inn Rak Inn Nan Taen Ko Kor Yaen Jut Kaen Yaen Kai Hua Hu Pen Mia
Poo Gun Tao Blaa Tor Tao Yaa Wa Chi Wang See Ni Hang Pee Yang Ma
Ma x 3*

This image can also be used for candle magic, but here it was drawn onto a metal plate using the Maai Kru, and drawn while resting on a woman's private parts. After each session of making these Yants, Ajarn had sex with her to seal the magic spell within. These plates are kept under the mattress to draw people to your bed, and are recharged whenever the bearer of the Yantra has sex.

The Inn Khoo is a specific Wicha, but there are many types of amulets that are not. With these amulets, an Ajarn will construct a talisman with the attributes of Saneah or Metta or Chok Laap and put that behind a recognisable image. In this way, fashion can play a part in the Thai Occult practices. A few years back, for instance, 4 Ears 5 Eyes had a bit of a resurgence, and many amulets came out to him, but they were just a collection of attributes behind that image. The same is as true for Nang Kwak as it is for the 4 Ears 5 Eyes demon, two classic amulet types that are but a group of magical characteristics.

As new markets open, the Thai Ajarns will try to please them by producing a style they like, which was the case with the 9 Tails Fox for the Chinese market. The 9 Tail Fox is again but a collection of the attributes that

devotees desire the most, but please note that some Ajarns can place an image into a strong Prai item. There is a famous maker of carved skull pieces in Chiang Mai and a Vodou Priest friend insists that the picture of 9 Tail Fox is within those pieces. There is no reason to doubt this man as he is an incredibly talented magician and this ability has been mentioned more than once by the Ajarns themselves. The same can be done with Phra Ngang, other deities and ghosts as well, but as yet, an Ajarn has not come forward to explain the process. Hints about this action have arisen during interviews as well as conjecture from devotees who have the required Samathi needed to be sure that an image is present.

Inn Khoo - an interview with Ajarn Suea

Ajarn Suea's Inn Khoo amulet is made up of two dolls that have been made of thread, and then bound to each other in an eternal embrace. Between them is part of the stick that has been used to pierce the body during a cremation to stop the intestines popping due to their water content. The thread comes from a funeral and has been applied to bind the body; it also acts to transmit the energy of the monks to aid the deceased's spirit. The dolls are soaked in a mixture of Nam Man Prai and the bone powders from a woman who died by drowning, which is one of the most potent sources of Prai. Two coffin nails have also been included in the embrace, one of which represents the female, and one of the male.

Three categories of bone that can be used to make the bone powder in a Lanna Inn Khoo. The first is the bone from a Phi Tai Hong (a person who died a horrific death), the second is from a person who died *Tai Prai* from nature, like drowning or being struck by lightning and the third one is called *Lai Tai* or 'sudden death'. In this case, the bone used is from Tai Prai as it was from drowning.

Ajarn often makes the Prai Inn Khoo because the non-Prai versions are considered to be higher magic and it is difficult to obtain the materials that are required by his Wicha, such as certain products from two beehives that grow on one branch of a tree. The Prai versions of the Inn Khoo are more forceful, but Ajarn would also make the non-Prai versions if he could find the materials, because he considers that magic extraordinary.

Ajarn Suea's Inn Khoo can be used towards any desired person, and not only for love. To use it, carry it around, especially after dark when it is more powerful. If the holder wishes to attract a specific person, hold them in mind or look directly at them and call to the Inn Khoo to tell it that this person is beautiful. Tell it to help in capturing the person's heart and that it will be repaid with merit or offerings. As this is lower magic, it is good to keep this in the pocket and to tap it when calling it to action. Talk to it often and befriend the ghost, it will serve the bearer well.

224. Opposite. A full tray of Inn Khoo Prai amulets by Ajarn Suea, which sold out very quickly due to their forceful nature.



The 4 Ears 5 Eyes Demon

See Hua Haa Taa is the Thai name for a monster that derives from a Hindu legend where Indra transformed herself into this demon to help people. In Thailand, the following legend is associated with this demon although there are many versions of this story due to the oral tradition in this part of the world, taking us well away from the Vedic roots. Written here is one version, but like many of the myths here, everybody seems to have their own.

There was a beggar family of a father, mother and son, and after the mother died, the father told his son that when he dies, he should bury him until the flesh has all left his bones and then dig him up, and roll his skull along the ground. Where it stopped the son should build a trap for an animal that will come, and it will bring with it great bounty. Once his father passed away, the son dutifully fulfilled his wishes, and one day a monster was trapped, just as his father had said and it looked like a gorilla with four ears and five eyes! Under the instructions from his father, he fed it and made a bonfire to keep it warm, but the creature was so hungry that it started eating the red-hot coals from the fire. That the monster ate the coals was surprising enough for the son to see, but then the animal began to pass faeces of pure gold! There was so much gold that he had to store it away as fast as the demon produced it; otherwise, someone may see.

It then came to pass that the King of the land was looking for a suitor for his daughter, but with the stipulation that he should offer enough money to build solid gold gutters around the Palace. In these old times no one had enough money to do such a thing except for the son, and he married the Princess as soon as the task was completed. The son had no worries about using his gold for this purpose as he believed that his supply of gold would never run out. The thought of all this gold played on the mind of the King, and he became intrigued as to how this young man came across so much gold. Eventually, the son foolishly told the story of the four ears five eyes demon, at which, the King sent his soldiers to take the animal into the Palace for his use. Unfortunately, the animal escaped and has never been seen since but he remains part of the folklore of Thailand, especially in the Lanna region.

In Thailand the 4 Ears and the 5 Eyes represent part of the maintenance of the Buddhist principles of Dhamma practice; namely, Bhramavihara (the four ears representing; four practices of Compassion, Metta, Mutitaa (Mutual concern for the welfare of others) and Upekha (equanimity). The five eyes represent the five precepts (not killing not stealing not indulging in perverse sexual or adulterous behaviour, not lying and not taking alcohol or intoxicating substances such as drugs). The talismans produced of 4 ears 5 eyes are quite wonderful but have yet to become popular outside Asia, which is a surprise considering the beauty of both the idea, the image used and the product made. The wonderfully odd thing about having this demon at home is that one of the offerings is a piece of coal and that it should be given at midnight on the day of a full moon. It also loves flowers, certain fruits and water to quench its thirst after eating all those hot coals.



225. The See Hua Haa Taa at Kruba Insom's Temple.



226. The Nang Kwak below are by Ajarn Suea and made from a Teak Tree struck by lightning, which adds a supernatural force to the statue. On the left is something rather rare, a bone that has been hand carved by Ajarn Phor Na to be Nang Kwak's hand. This is used by holding the bone and pulling money in with it, like the arms of the mechanical cats, waving constantly for money to come.



Nang Kwak - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

One of the strongest amulets that the author has ever come into contact with was a Nang Kwak from Luang Phor Pina, which was nuclear. Let's see what Ajarn Perm Rung has to say about this popular style of amulet.

The original story of Nang Kwak comes from the legend of a merchant's daughter, who was very beautiful. She could sell anything that no one else could sell because of her charm, calling out to people, 'come here darling and buy this', beckoning with her hand and no one could resist. She was the greatest seller, and any statues of her usually show a representation of the woman from the legend, in many ways similar to most religious objects. Her figures can be seen everywhere, beckoning people into shops and to market stalls, but usually they are just made of plastic, sometimes with a mechanical arm.

Generally, an Ajarn will bless the Nang Kwak statue to give it a super strong Metta, Chok Laap and Maha Niyom effect and they are rarely Prai, but Ajarn makes Prai versions because they are even more effective. Ajarn once made one with Prai and carved from Takien Wood that was on top of a bone fragment from a beautiful woman. Nang Kwak is not a Wicha in the same way as a Kuman Thong; it is a statue in the shape of a legendarily beautiful woman that is blessed with the attributes that can help with a great business.

Maa Saep Nang

There is a Thai fable about a wealthy family with a beautiful daughter who was pursued by many suitors, but the family was wary of letting any of them close to her without vetting them thoroughly. The family also reared horses for a living, and their horses were famous for both their abilities and their incredible beauty. Their daughter took care of the horses every day until one day she felt an intense desire for a particular horse, eventually consummating her passions with the stallion. When the family found out about the event, they were incredibly offended, and they killed the horse on the spot, thinking it had bewitched their daughter. The daughter heard of this, and became so sad that she died of a broken heart, from sorrow for the loss of her horse and exceptionally virile lover.

The ancient Ajarns and Mhor Phi (spirit doctors) of old believed that this particular horse had incredible Maha Sanaeh, so strong that even a human woman could fall in love with a horse and allow it to have sexual contact. The Thai makers will evoke any deity, spirit or legend that shows such powers, be it for attraction, kindness, invincibility or popularity. For this reason, an invocation of Maa Saep Nang is a potent love charm, and that whoever carries it will undoubtedly have the charming effect on others around them. Mae Saep Nang means 'horse take woman'.

The Maa Saep Nang is a rare type of invocation mostly used in amulets and Pha Yant but very rarely made as a statue. The strong image of the woman being mounted by a horse can be a little too much for many but as an alternative spell for Maha Saneah, it works and there are collectors of this type of talisman. It only takes one maker to produce a Maa Saep Nang that captures the imagination of the people and yes! There would be a Maa Saep Nang swinging from the inside mirror of every car in Thailand.

The magical legend of the Maa Saep Nang has been interpreted in a few ways ¹. The image of Maa Saep Nang may portray a loving husband who, due to his karma was reincarnated as the horse and the woman recognised him as her former husband from a previous life. This action of the horse having sex with her was them continuing their loving relationship. Another way that this has been interpreted is that it is a way for a woman to attain magical power by taking semen from a strong animal, and there are versions of this style of amulet with various animals having sex with a woman; bull takes lady, the elephant takes the lady, a tiger takes the lady, etc. The imagery represents a power transfer from a large and powerful animal to a smaller one.

1. Susan Conway - *Tai Magic* - p70

Maa Saep Nang - and interview with Ajarn Khaw

The image on Ajarn Khaw's Maa Saep Nang is very raw, and has been influenced by modern pornography. If people see this amulet, it is easy for them to know who made it as that image was his idea. It is okay to change the image for a charm, all of which develop over time, but the Wicha must remain the same. In the old images of Maa Saep Nang, the image is viewed from the side, and the lady hugs the horse's stomach while being entered, an image often used on the Pha Yant that you see in shops and businesses. A more modern image is where the lady is kneeling and the horse mounting her from behind, but these are just images, it is the magic that has to be correct.

Maa Saep Nang is for charm and sex, for love and luck too. It is a favourite of Lanna Masters, a traditional and original Lanna style, and on the amulet markets, it is easy to see a lot of this kind of amulet. The Wicha is very old and an adaptation of other Wicha that bring Saneah, charm and good fortune.

The Takrut on the back of this is a Lanna style Takrut that has been blessed in a cemetery. It has to be written and consecrated on the same night in the graveyard for this to be an effective Maa Saep Nang. The Takrut holds the power of the Wicha and is a written spell rather than any Yantra construction such as a square. Below the Takrut is Ajarn Khaw's Samnak name pressed into the mix.



227. Ajarn Khaw's fabulously filthy Maa Saep Nang.



228. A tray of beautiful Puttakun amulets in the Samnak of Ajarn Perm Rung.

Puttakun Amulets - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

The trend today is to make Puttakun Magic amulets for the Asian market that have no ghosts, because many people are scared of haunted talismans. Ajarn Rung is now making many White Magic charms because of the increasing demand for these from foreigners, the majority of which are women, and they want something both beautiful and effective, but not ghosts.

Recently, many amulets have been made to appeal to the Chinese market, which includes images from Chinese legends and dedicated to Thai Ajarns of Chinese origin, but the magic and the kata are still correct. The imagery with these things makes zero difference to the effectiveness of the amulet as the magic always helps the way it is meant to, which is primarily for Chok Laap and Metta. The use of such imagery brings more people to experience Thai Magic; there is nothing relating to the imagery in the amulet itself, but the Yantra is correct, as it should always be.

The best example for this modern trend is with the 9 Tail Fox, but there's also Ah Pek, who was an old Ajarn of Chinese ancestry, and his imagery has become very popular indeed. Ajarn Ah Pek was very good at Yant Faa Prataan (which translates as 'bestowing from the sky Yant'), and the Chinese market has taken to these amulets because they have a cultural connection to them. That Yant and amulets dedicated to him sell very well to those devotees who feel a secure connection to his Chinese ancestry.

All these amulets are all very much the same and it is only the imagery that changes, but underlying that is the desire for each Ajarn to want to help people with their lives. Yes, amulets of these types can also have Prai in them, but currently, most people do not want that in their charms. Ajarn wants to make something clear to all devotees and says that when he makes amulets for good fortune, people often misunderstand the attribute and go to the Casino. If these amulets were good for the Casino, Ajarn says he would be in there every day, winning loads of money! (*laughter*). Many devotees misrepresent the attribute, and are misunderstanding what Chok Laap is. Chok Laap is for good fortune, not for people to go crazy with the lottery or like a man with four arms at the roulette table.

The Nine Tail Fox - an Interview with Ajarn Khaw

Ajarn Khaw is not sure about whether the 9 Tail Fox is a devil or a deity, so he does not want to say, he doesn't want to make a mistake and mislead people, but Chinese people love 9 Tail Fox. They started first by coming to Thai Ajarns and asking them to bless their 9 Tail Fox, and slowly, the Thai Ajarns began to make them because people wanted that magic.

In these amulets, we put the lucky magic and charming magic inside, but we don't have this lady with nine tails in our culture. In Thailand, we have a dog with 9 Tails in our legends and stories but not a lady deity. The Chinese people started this trend, and it became extremely popular. Now many Masters

make and bless these amulets, but this is Thai magic, not Chinese and Thai magic can bring help to any culture, especially if the item has resonance within that culture.

***The Salika Riak Nang Amulet* - An Interview with Ajarn Khaw**

The Salika is represented by a bird or pair of birds, whose song is so enchanting that the mind drifts away into bliss, like listening to the birds sing beautifully in the morning in your garden while drinking coffee, having a slow life. The Salika amulets are good for talking as they bring enchantment to what is said, making them great for work and social situations. Ajarn's Salika Riak Nang is a Salika amulet to call the lady to come (Nang means Lady in Thai), but they work for both sexes, everybody can use them. The Salika is another ancient magic, and the old Salika were made from Maai Mayom wood, which is excellent for talismans aimed towards popularity and charm. There are also other ways to bring the Salika effect into a person's life. With Sak Yant, Ajarn Khaw has the Wicha to make an oil Sak Yant to Salika on the front of the shoulder, and when a person needs more charm in their speech, they say the kata and touch their tongue onto the Yant. Lick it for more charming speech, and it is oil because it is best not to let people see some forms of magic.

The Salika tattooed with ink are usually on the back of the shoulder, like a bird sat singing near their ear and there's also Salika magic for inside the mouth and the tongue. There is a Lanna Wicha for a Sak Yant of a spell inside the lip, just Akahara in the Lanna script and there is also a Sak Yant for the tongue, but people are scared of that one as they fear the unusual quality of pain. It is a quick Yant, just a small Yant Na, known as Na Salika and is applied quickly. For those people who are scared of the pain, there is also a gold leaf blessing for the tongue without a Sak Yant, which is very popular. The gold used is then left for the body to absorb the Wicha. With the amulet itself, it is designed as a piece of jewellery because people like this style and it hides the magic, which is what many people want. The back of the amulet has charming oil, the cupid is for beauty as it holds no function and that's the same with the gems and the glitter. The image is beautiful, not scary or raw like before, when a bird was roughly cut from wood. Now it is art. The jewellery style of talisman started 5 or 6 years ago when people wanted gems, and that is fine, the magic is in the mixture.

***Phi Suea Amulet* - the butterfly lady - An Interview with Ajarn Khaw.**

Ajarns use lots of animal images, which originates from a long time ago. The tiger for power, the dragon for authority and animals for charm and beauty. The butterfly is used for amulets too, for beauty, which is an old idea but the style is modern, akin to magical jewellery. Some styles of magic are kept the same, and some change over time. If the image is good it can be continually developed by Ajarns in the hope of pleasing their followers and devotees alike. It is all beneficial magic, which at present is presented as cute and beautiful but the power is the same, and the Wicha is correct.

On the front of the enamel locket is a special Yant for charming, which is to break to bonds of the heart but here it is there for beauty. Some like Yant on their amulets as they believe that they are more powerful but where an Ajarn has not drawn each Yant individually, the power of the Yant is low. A strong blessing is the most important aspect, along with the best ingredients and a correct Takrut. There are many forms of this style of amulet, and they all follow a similar Wicha. The images can change but the magic is the same, and this fact enables the Ajarns to fill the demands of devotees from any region of the world although as yet, there are none that have been designed specifically for the Western market. As The West is outside Asia, it may involve too much of a shift in the mindset of the makers but on this matter, only time will tell.

229. Two of Ajarn Khaw's Puttakun amulets, his Salika Riak Nang and Phi Suea.





230. The amazing Nang Prai Ong Kru from Ajarn Verataep.

231. And his deliciously funky Phor Hong Prai bucha from a few years back.



The Prai Family

The Nang Prai - an interview with Ajarn Verataep

Ajarn Verataep has made many types of amulets, and all of them are superb, but his Nang Prai has had stunning reviews from friends and buyers alike. Here, Ajarn Verataep discusses an old release, but few Nang Prai of this quality have been released since these were made. There are two grades of Ajarn Verataep's Gold Faced Nang Prai, the normal one and the Master Version (known as an Ong Kru), which has corpse hair and was blessed over the period of a year. Both are good, but the Master version is something extraordinary.

These two Nang Prai are moulded from a collection of soils from 7 temples, 7 markets, 7 cities, 7 wealthy family's houses and 7 graveyards, which in many ways is akin to making a Kuman Thong. These soils were then mixed with haunted items, such as powdered Takien wood and the bones of a wealthy man who died in an accident on a Saturday and was cremated on a Tuesday. There is a difference in the magic between the two versions with the first one being superb for business and protection and the Master Version best for attracting people and calling for good things to come to life. If a devotee wants a particular lover to come, write their name on the back of this Nang Prai (here he holds up the Master Version), chant the kata and make that wish before sitting the amulet on a photograph of that person. If a devotee wants to make the wish stronger, just put some Saneah oil on the amulet but when making the request and calling for that person, don't forget to say their name as well.

Once Ajarn assembled the ingredients for these amulets, a spoken kata calls out to the spirits to ask who wants to do a good deed and become a Nang Prai. The Nang Prai spirit is constructed by the Ajarn using the 32 parts of the body knowledge and the four elements in a very similar way to the Hoon Payon, but a Nang Prai is more like a type of Nymph, not the spirit of the dead. Some Ajarns also put a ghost in the amulet with the Nang Prai spirit, but Ajarn Verataep's Wicha does not do that; if it is a good Nang Prai there is no need for anything else. The Nang Prai Wicha is ancient magic, and the language used to create these reflects that. She is a guardian angel that protects the owner of a Nang Prai, and she is empowered in return through merit, which has to be dedicated to her. How well a Nang Prai does with helping the owner depends on the owner taking good care of the spirit, the more merit that is given, the more the Nang Prai will help in return.

To praise a Nang Prai, offer her water and beautiful flowers and when she is doing well, rice wine but don't forget the merit, she becomes stronger with merit. Once the devotee is close to the Nang Prai they can make any wish to her, whether for prosperity, protection, lovers, anything, work hard for her, and she will return this tenfold. These can be a highly beneficial amulet when looked after correctly, and praised in the recommended way.

The Mae Hong Prai - an interview with Ajarn A Klongkarn

The mixture for Ajarn A's Hong Prai (either a Mae Hong Prai or Phor Hong Prai) is dirt from 7 graveyards, dirt from 7 haunted places such as a place of accidents or suicide, soil from 7 abandoned temples, 7 ant hills, dirt from where 7 buffaloes lay, dirt from 7 shores, dirt from 7 pottery makers and coffin nails. When each item of the mixture is collected, Ajarn needs to chant the relevant Kata to ask the land spirits for allowance before taking the soils. The mixture can be used to make other amulets as well, so in this case, Ajarn will collect as much as is needed for this batch of talismans, then more for making other charms later. If he wants to make Nang Prai, he can use the same mixture, but the Nang Prai has a different spell. The coffin nails on each side of the figure can be from the coffin of any dead body. The corpse cloth on this occasion has to come from a female body, but Hong Prai can be made from both male or female remains as long as they died horrifically.

When something wished for happens after using Ajarn's amulets, the amulets will need to be praised and offered food. Anything red, like raw meats, is fine and they can be beef or pork, but any bloody meat is good in this case. The Hong Prai is made from the spirit of the person who died horrifically, and they prefer raw, bloody food. The kata is essential with both the creation of the amulet and when offering praise, the kata has to be correct according to the Wicha and spoken correctly by the devotee. The kata for each function is different. The kata to praise is not the same as the kata for creation, which is quite complicated and never shared publicly.

The Prai Thong - an interview with Ajarn Perm Rung

People often mix up the Prai Thong and the Hong Prai types of amulets. The Phor Hong Prai and the Mae Hong Prai are just male and female ghosts but the Prai Thong can use any good Prai source, and the sex of that Prai is irrelevant. Ajarn can even use a child bone source for this style of talisman; it works just as well. All the available bone sources make a good Prai Thong as long as the source has a strong supernatural power.

It has to be said here that the ghosts in Prai and the regular spirit are different. Normal ghosts are everywhere but a Prai ghost has been placed in an amulet using the Pruk Saek, so in effect, Ajarn makes that Prai ghost. The more unique the Prai used, the stronger and more useful the spirit in the amulet is. The Muan Sarn that is used when making this amulet varies depending on the gender of the ghost, but the Prai Thong amulet when finished is of no specific gender.

The Prai Thong Wicha is for bringing wealth and is extremely good for both business and business type relationships.



232. Another wonderful bucha from Ajarn Verataep, his Mae Hong Prai.



233. These are exceptionally rare and raw examples of a Yoni, an amulet which are usually molded Muan Sarn and earths. The talismans above are real Yoni that have been taken from accident victims. The access required to obtain such pieces is now rare and these have come from a remote area of the country, harvested by an undertaker. They follow the traditional Lanna style by having a Takrut for activation but in some cases, that Takrut is large and pushed into the hole.
As Thailand modernises further, these examples may be the last seen.

The Yoni

The Yoni is an immensely potent sensual talisman. It is the passive feminine energy of the cosmos, which entwines with the active phallic power of the Shiva Lingam. The amulet, which is usually a representation of a vulva, is an occult charm that can be worn close to the private parts to pull at the eroticism of others. It is, despite common belief, not only for ladies to use but can also be used by men to attract the opposite sex in that they feel more affinity with the bearer. This amulet uses the most ancient and primitive method of attraction and enchantment, that of mother nature by working on the libido and also emanating from the aura of being 'in heat'. It brings an animal lust into play, promoting an effect akin to being in the midst of the 'mating season'.

The Yoni is an ancient style of talisman that is also often preferred by gay women (but obviously not for gay men) in their pursuit of a partner. The Yoni is as strong as any phallus but has a less forceful and more beguiling nature, allowing the person attracted to pursue the bearer vigorously, becoming more and more desperate as arousal takes hold. It works the same way with attracting people with business, by increasing arousal for a deal or even a product, distracting the customer from the goal of attaining the best deal. It bestows confidence in the abilities of the bearer to be more passive in letting those who are charmed come forwards and enables a motherly guidance, gently nudging the person into the direction the bearer wishes them to go. The Yoni encourages the willingness of the subject to take the leap and risk opening their tender heart, which most people hide away to protect. It also raises the mutual trust that is expected in a true and loving relationship. Little is known about the ancient Wicha of the Yoni but much has been heard of the powerful effect it has upon the opposite sex (or same sex with gay women) and of its ability to bring great prosperity to business owners, gamblers and those who work in social or public positions.

On rare occasions, it is possible to find an amulet that contains the actual Yoni from a corpse that usually includes the clitoris, and these are highly prized for their effectiveness. There is strong magical lore surrounding these items in the cultures where they have been made, and in the Western traditions, it is believed that one can see spirits when looking through the hole of the vagina of a deceased woman. Where they are found in Thailand, they come in two styles. The first is where the actual vagina has been removed and dried before making into an amulet, or the fresh flesh is cased and oil added to help its preservation (usually olive oil or sesame oil is best). In this case, the Yoni should be cut from a Phi Tai Hong ghost, someone who has died in a violent manner or through suicide and these items are astonishingly strong, to the point where great care has to be taken by the bearer, lest they end up being controlled by the ghost within.

When amulets are made that are extremely powerful, they have to be sourced from the best makers so that the correct controls are in place, or the ghost can play havoc with the life of the bearer. These are now rarely

made in Thailand due to the lack of source materials but when one comes onto the market, they both shock through their rawness and their potency.

There is another Wicha used to make a Yoni talisman, and here, they slice the full groin area away and therefore, it does not include the clitoris. It is like a thin, dried wafer of flesh and the name is usually given of the corpse that this originated. The relationship between the owner of this piece and the talisman is different with this Wicha too because the makers say that a bond has to be made between the spirit and the person who holds her Yoni to the point where the name of the bearer is part of the Wicha of creation. Working directly with a strong ghost is only for high practitioners and those of great experience. (see page 296)

Animal Amulets

The Luk Krok Meow

Due to the difficulty in obtaining a human Luk Krok, one of the latest fads in Thailand has been to make Luk Krok from a stillborn animal, with cats being the creature of choice. The cat is used because of their spiritual nature, their ability to see ghosts and the fact that they reside on the edges of reality. The relationship that a cat has with human beings is also important, but if that is the case, why don't they make Luk Krok from puppies? (The resulting howls of protest from The West are already resounding)

Besides the effigy type of amulet, some of which are beautiful and artistic, there seem to be two types of the Luk Krok Meow amulets that use the actual body of a cat. The first is where a fetus has been baked and had gold leaf applied in a similar way to making a real Luk Krok, but with the second, the animal is larger and dried slowly, desiccating and preserving the flesh while leaving the fur intact. Both styles have a strong feeling to them, and the choice between them depends on the taste of the bearer. If the umbilical cord remains on the fetal type, they are particularly sought after.

Besides the common cat, Luk Krok have also been made from Pigs and Buffalo, but the cat is by far the most popular. One scarce example is where a dead Tiger kitten from a Northern zoo was turned into a cased Luk Krok, and it was beautiful but very costly.

The Luk Krok Meow - an interview by Ajarn Perm Rung

The Luk Krok Meow is popular because the character of a cat is adored and they have an imploring nature. It is like when you have a cat, and it always comes to be around you and rubs your legs, it makes people want to play with it, take care of it and hold it, which can be seen as very strong Metta from the cat. In Thai culture, a cat is compared to a novice monk as they are both harmless and have innocence. There is a saying that anyone who can kill a cat can kill a novice monk, branding the killer of either as a vicious



234. *The Luk Krok Meow of Ajarn Perm Rung.*



235. Scorpions, ready to be cased in the Samnak of Ajarn Suea.

person. How can someone harm a cat or a novice monk? This is an apt metaphor for the levels of Metta that a Luk Krok Meow can bring to its owner.

Other parts of a cat are also used in magic. The umbilical cord is considered to be the most difficult item to attain because if a kitten dies at birth the mother will eat the kitten, and the cord but sometimes, they carry it and give it their owner. If the Luk Krok Meow has an umbilical cord, it will make someone exceptionally lucky, enhancing the usual levels of Chok Laap that comes with this amulet.

When making a Luk Krok Meow, the cat has to die naturally, which is the same with other animals that can be turned into amulets such as scorpions, centipedes and two-tailed gecko's. Luk Krok's can also be made from pig's, birds, bats, tigers and bears. Any animal can be used, but the finished result depends on what magical attributes the Ajarn puts in them as well as the personality or nature of the animal itself. For instance, with the Luk Krok Tiger, besides the usual Metta and Chok Laap comes Maha Amnat and Serm Baramee (a raising of your prestige), which follows people's view of this animal. The bat is a favourite for the people who work at night, and with the pig, the bearer can attain all the good things in life with ease, which comes from a saying about the pig in Thai, that everything is easy.

To praise the Luk Krok Meow, treat it like a real cat. Give it water or milk and either cat food or fish, whichever is easy. Say the kata and make wishes for protection, luck and attraction. They can be extremely rewarding talismans.

Animal Amulets - an interview with Ajarn Suea

Our ancestors believed that certain animals, such as cats, tigers, elephants, rats and pigs, for example, have power within them. From the Wicha held by Ajarn Suea, animal parts can be used to make Takruets, and these amulets are given the powerful attributes directly from creatures of nature, such as Chok Laap, Metta and good fortune with business (an example for this would be the rolled skin Takruets from wild cats). All the animals that can be used to make amulets have to be found dead and not be killed by the Ajarn, otherwise, the body or its products would be of no use whatsoever.

One of the Buddha's reincarnations was troubled by an evil spirit that disguised itself as a rat, so The Buddha used the flakes of his skin and made the model of a small tiger. This story is considered by the ancient people of Thailand to be the origin of cats, which is why even today, they believe that whoever can harm a cat is akin to someone who could hurt a novice monk. Cats are interwoven into Thai culture, which is why there are quite a few amulet types involving cats and two that use their body or body parts.

The ***Rok Meow*** is a cat's placenta that must also include the umbilical cord, and it is regarded as having a magical power within itself. If it is then blessed and enhanced by the Ajarns knowledge of the correct process to do this,

it can have twice that power, making it a highly effective amulet. People believe that cat amulets have the power to bring good fortune for business and protect their owner's property, acting like a wildcat bound to the home. The spirit of the cat is also believed to have the power to stop the money leaving the house and draining away, and magically, the action of the cats' claws when purring and treading keeps grabbing the money and pulling it in. In the past, the process of making the Rok Meow amulet involved drying it entirely in the sun, but nowadays, as it is considered to be a rare item, it can sometimes get stolen or taken by other animals for food. When Ajarn makes a Rok Meow, he leaves it in the sun for three days and then bakes it until completely dry, and the process of making the Luk Krok Meow is the same before turning them into amulets.

In magical principles, the Rok Meow is seen as being like a wallet or money bag. The placenta has a natural pocket that needs to be cleaned out and not cut, or the money will fall out, and the best Rok Meow look like a money bag. The Takruts on the back of the placenta are male and female versions for 'Noo Kin Nom Meow', which has an image of mice feeding on the teats of the mother cats, representing bounty. The Phra Ngang on the back acts to stimulate the power further.

The **Luk Krok Meow** is a type of Payon, closely following the Wicha of the Hoon Payon but having the cat's spirit within it rather than a ghost. To bucha the Luk Krok Meow is like taking care of a cat, by offering fish, milk or cat food. The kata for a Luk Krok Meow is generally very long, and no one seems able to remember it, so Ajarn Suea blesses the kata within the amulet as it is being made to make having it more comfortable. Whoever obtains this cat will have to name it, and for that they need a kata. There is a second kata given for everyday use that is a summoning and controlling kata to bring the cat spirit to them and keep it in line, which has to be done with a spirit pet. The Luk Krok Meow Ajarn obtains generally come from a cat that has miscarried, or kittens that were stillborn. The miscarried kittens are very rare as they get typically eaten by the mother, and are the best source for this type of Luk Krok.

As other animals have attributes already within them, it means that they too can be used as a Luk Krok. A rat foetus can be used to make a Luk Krok Rat because rats are considered exceptionally lucky, bringing luck to the owner with a particular emphasis on gambling. An Ajarn should be able to see which animal is best to bring a specific attribute, and then use the same process as making a Luk Krok to emphasise that attribute. The rat is excellent to use because rats can survive in any environment and there is a saying in Thai, 'a rat falls into a bucket of rice' meaning its luck is never used up, will never end.

Bat Amulets

This bat amulet has a kata called *Kang Khow Kaew* that gives the attribute of Metta Maha Niyom but specifically in the hours of darkness. To obtain the



236. The Luk Krok Meow of Ajarn Suea before casing.



237. Bat amulets for the people of the night.

bat, Ajarn hires a man to go into the caves around Chiang Mai that hold bat colonies and check whether any young bats can be found dead on the floor. The bat cannot be killed to make these amulets; they have to die naturally or again, the magic does not work.

The amulet consists solely of the dead bat, and it brings its power at night and the later at night, the stronger it is for attracting and befriending others. These are for people that work at night, particularly for workers in the sex trade, but also good for anyone who is a night animal. The phial of oil on the back is called Waan Hom Daeng, which is for further attraction. Some have an Inn Khoo on the back, and some a dice that was used in a whore house but both are for luck at night. The Takrut holds the kata for Kang Khaw Kaew, acting to empower this bat to help the person who wears it.

Scorpion Amulets

The scorpion brings with it the power of authority (Maha Amnat) because when anyone sees a scorpion, they usually run in the opposite direction. Scorpions are quite easy to find as people eat them but Ajarn gets his when a farmer burns the rice stubble on the field before the wet season, and then they bring them to Ajarn Suea. Again, these cannot be used if they have been intentionally killed, their deaths have to be incidental. The batch of scorpions on page 450 were put into Waan Gai Daeng oil, which adds the element of extreme sexual attraction to the Maha Amnat already present in the body of the scorpion itself.

Centipede Amulets

Centipede amulets are different from scorpion amulets, despite being equally as scary. The centipede has the power of both black and white magic. When it is the time of year for the annual donation for the local temple, they will always hang a crocodile or centipede flag, and they represent protection against evil spirits. In black magic, they use it as part of a curse where they use the spirit of the centipede and place it inside someone's stomach to eat their intestines. In an amulet, the centipede protects against the evil spirits and spiritual attack, and are particularly effective in this role.

Ciccada Amulets

These insects are used to call a lover in the same way a Ciccada screeches during the mating season, and the screeching can be very loud indeed. With Beetle Amulets, Thai Ajarns only usually use the emerald green beetle because they believe it to be a reincarnation of Shiva, but Ajarn Suea does not make those. Ajarn does make Snake Amulets though, which are primarily for keeping and acquiring money. The snake used has to have died while hatching or killed while inside the egg.

When a snake wants to eat something they let animals come to them, trespass into their domain and they wait motionless until something comes close enough. The effect is very similar to a Boa Spur amulet, which represents the ability to allow a person to enter into the business premises, waiting to act at the right time to secure a good deal.

Leklai

There is a problem with Leklai because even though the Ajarns for this book are some of the best in Thailand, there is no expert in this substance to give answers that are worth being put into print. These are only collected thoughts on Leklai, which have come from talking to various Ajarns and collectors but a dedicated piece of work on Leklai is sorely needed. It is the most mysterious substance within the practices of The Thai Occult.

Leklai is a mysterious, sacred substance that is the subject of legendary tales of miracle powers and has become a cult item in recent years. Although other cultures in the region know Leklai, it is considered to be a Thai phenomenon to those who follow the regional magical practices. It is in Thailand and Thailand alone that there are still to be found a number of Master Ajarns who are adept at sensing the presence of the best Leklai because it needs to be coaxed from hiding. Leklai is considered to have a life of its own, to choose its owner and come and go by its own will. The Thai makers are experts in the art of transforming Leklai into various forms of amulet and even the insertion of Leklai under the skin of devotees. One very famous Ajarn has a ball of this in his left arm, placed there by a prestigious monk to both continuously cleanse his body of any harmful influences derived from working with the spirits and protect him from all harm.

There appear to be many forms of Leklai, but it usually looks like a metallic element that is considered a living being of the Deva classification but a Deva that has been born on Earth. There are many varieties of this substance available on the market and more continually comes to light but much of it is of a dubious nature. Some of it resembles Haematite as it becomes like a mirror when polished and it also possesses magnetic qualities that are helpful to health. Other forms look like a meteorite, and still, another looks like a conglomerate of small black crystals, which has lead to confusion in this field as they all purport to serve a similar function for the bearer. Having handled many Leklai amulets, it is the opinion of the author that it can be placed into two categories. Firstly, a metallic and magnetic mineral that can be used by the makers to help cleanse the body, much in the same way as the plethora of magnetic amulets available in the world today and secondly, true Leklai, which can be from many sources and of many types. It can come in many colours and must have a property that is supernatural, in that it does not conform to the laws of nature.

If there is any form of Leklai, or place where it is said that real Leklai is found, it is the cave, and many strange stories have come to light regarding its collection. Before the public interest in Leklai began some years ago, it was almost always assumed to come from caves in mountain forests, and that Leklai of this type can be stretched when heated. It is collected from the caves by anointing the area of stone that contains Leklai in honey (its favourite food) and then heating it under a candle flame until the Leklai hidden within it runs out to come and eat the honey. The Leklai can also be made to drip down in a long thin line from the side or roof of the cave and

then it is cut using a specially consecrated Miit Mhor knife. It is not possible for any person to cut Leklai because the substance is guarded over by the spirits and Devas of the cave and the forest, as well as the local Yaksa giants who protect it. The adept has to be pure in thought during the whole of this collection process so as not to be killed or consumed by the spirit in Leklai.

Some monks and Ajarns are renowned for sourcing cave Leklai, but they have to have a profound knowledge of the natural law and the resulting magical abilities to achieve this task. Periodically, grainy photos appear of these makers coaxing Leklai from the walls and ceilings of caves where it hangs down like grey, sinuous plastic but none can be reproduced here due to the low quality of these images. In the circumstances where this happens, flash photography is banned as the light will both affect the maker's trance and 'shock' the Leklai. For this reason, it should be presumed that much of this has been faked, but some adepts can reputedly collect Leklai from caves, and some adepts can find Leklai in the forests. Forest Leklai is said to 'grow' in the ground near to sacred trees and at the mouths of caves but only a person who is close to the spirit of the Leklai can find this material. Having held real forest Leklai, it does feel like holding something sacred from and out of the forest; there is a sense of 'jungle' within the bead of stone.

Leklai is said to protect the bearer from guns or sharp objects (such as a knife or sword) and all other harmful weapons by flowing to the areas needing protection. It is a potent cleanser for any black magic within the body and can heal disease, making it one of the few amulets with a health aspect. It is also known to become light and heavy in succession and to disappear suddenly, to be found in a different place later. With being highly sought after there are many fakes and only the ones from the best makers can be trusted, even though the costs are higher. Please be careful with this type of amulet or money can be wasted with no apparent benefit.

Please see page 223 regarding the inserting of Leklai into the body.

238. Leklai Bullets.





239 Both sides of a fabulous full Panneng from the Lanna traditions.



Panneng

Panneng is an ancient word with two meanings; the first is from the Javanese for a belt for items worn as part of a costume for traditional dance, usually as a strip of cloth about 15cms wide ¹. The word is also used in the Thai Saiyasart practices because a Panneng is also a talisman made from part of the skull, especially the more spiritually active region of the forehead around the third eye. According to the story of Khun Paen, there is a tradition in Thailand of using the skull from the corpse of a person who died a violent death, sawing the skull into strips and weaving the strips into a belt in a checkered pattern with Yantra inscribed on each piece ². Another note in the story of Khun Paen describes a type of amulet as skull pieces interwoven with the hair from the dead into a kind of vest or chest plate, a technique not seen in modern times (but it sounds fantastic!) ³.

Another legend associated with Panneng is that of the tale of that ghost Mae Nak and one of Thailand's most famous monks, Somdej Tho, who helped subdue this incredibly powerful spirit. Mae Nak was the pregnant teenage wife of a soldier left behind when he went to fight in the Siam – Vietnamese war of around 1830. Unfortunately, Nak died before her severely wounded husband returned home, only to be cared for by her ghost, even to the point where she killed some villagers who tried to warn her man that his wife was in fact dead. This violent ghost was only persuaded to pass over by Somdej Tho, leaving her husband for this life and Somdej Tho then cut the Panneng from her skull to help both release and control her spirit to protect the people in the vicinity.

In Thailand, the region of the skull between and above the eyes is considered to hold extreme magical potency as it resides in the highest part of the body, and is the seat of the third eye. The crown area is also of significance in some Wicha in certain magical lineages, but generally, the forehead is the most desirable area to be used in The Thai Occult practices. In the Samnak's of some Ajarns, it is possible to see some full skulls but these are on their shrines and are spirit familiars. There is one in the Samnak of a very famous Ajarn in Bangkok that is often wrapped in blessed cloth, and when asked about it, Ajarn said that it is nice to get some peace.

The modern use of Panneng is primarily for amulets, and only a part of the skull is used, which enables it to be worn discretely, without losing any of the inherent magical potency ⁴. These can be plain bone with added Yant geometry, painted to show the deity or spirit the Panneng is invoking or even beautifully carved. Panneng that use a combination of these styles are also made, expressing the maker's artistry as well as their spiritual skills. As you will see later in this book, some of the Panneng that combine these styles are quite stunningly beautiful, and this art is developing at quite a rate, as with all living and vibrant cultures. The most desirable items are known as full Panneng, which use both the forehead and a section of the top part of the skull. In rare cases, the whole top of the skull is used in a similar way to Kapala (the skull bowls of Tibetan Buddhist origin), but here

they are as a magical item rather than any specific reference to the impermanence of life. The inherent magic firmly places this art as a form of necromancy, albeit with Buddhist overtones ⁵.

When an Ajarn uses a section of skull to make an amulet, the region of the third eye is the most desirable although in modern times, pretty much any part of the skull is used, mainly due to the scarcity of source materials and the desirability of the item itself. Currently, a Panneng's value is calculated from its size, the cause of death of the person, whether the name of the person it came from can be attributed to the piece, the region of the skull used and the perceived skills of the maker. The cause of death of the person the Panneng came from is essential as this can add considerable spiritual power and therefore, value. At the point of death, when the physical body has naturally reached the end of its time, the astral body will know that the body is going to die and slowly ease itself out of the body. The astral body will then be able to move around and continue for a while but with being subject to the Dhamma of Impermanence (as are all things), will eventually reach the point of cessation ⁶. When death occurs suddenly or unexpectedly due to abnormal circumstances, such as being murdered or dying in an accident, the astral body does not have time to see death coming. The spirit of the person is suddenly separated from its body without warning and is said to wander around, confused and unable to pass on. Sometimes, such a spirit will appear and become visible because it is trying to stay in the world of the living as it does not yet comprehend or accept that it has died. This spirit can be full of anger and wrath, and it is this emotional power that the maker uses to create a strong Panneng talisman, while at the same time appeasing the spirit so that it does not harm the bearer.

It is worth noting here that in a land where most people are cremated, some are not as it is considered better to bury them. These include the bodies of those who have died from suicide, accidents or by violent means and while this action seems to coincide with the demand for the use of these particular bodies, this action is tied to Buddhism rather than the native traditions of necromancy. In the last ten years the popularity of these amulets has spread throughout Asia, and with the demand for them from Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China some of the ideas about the areas used has changed because of the various cultural influences. Some now believe that certain parts of the forehead are better for gambling and the lottery ⁷ and that the cheekbone holds special powers but the Thais do not follow this belief. The makers may adapt their products to pander to the demand from outside Thailand, but they do not believe in these ideas themselves, sticking to the point that the third eye region has to be there to be a top quality Panneng. Saying that, a renowned seller of these items considers that any part of the skull fills the desired role of these magical objects with any inherent variations in power dependent on both the maker, the source of the bone and the deity or spirit invoked. ⁸

The most sought-after Panneng are from younger people who have died a violent death, died in childbirth or committed suicide due to the violence and



240. A carved and painted full Panneng, which are becoming rare.





241. The Panneng of a 14 year old boy has two of his teeth in the load on the back.
Teeth are sometimes added to the rear to infer that the magic is tenacious.

and ferocity of the resident spirit ⁹. When a life is lost through violence or during pregnancy, the life force is angry, and it is this that makes them the best Panneng to use as the maker has an emotional power to work with. In the past, the families of suicide victims often donated the skull of their loved one in the hope that as a ghost they can improve their karma by doing good deeds for others. The makers will then spend up to a year working with the spirit and calming its nature while trying to retain its spiritual power. For particularly tricky spirits, it can be beneficial to ordain it as a Buddhist monk, for as a monk it is bound to a peaceful life and is expected not to harm others. The making of these talismans involves a deep knowledge that is gained from an apprenticeship with a Master, prolonged meditation to build Samathi and an effective Wicha ¹⁰.

Nowadays, many of the skulls used originate from 'unusual sources'. Demand has raised the value of Panneng to a point where sourcing these things has become a way to supplement an income, especially in the rural or more impoverished areas of both Thailand and the surrounding countries. Today, it seems that the source of the Panneng is less important to the buyers than what the maker can instill into the Panneng. The monks and Ajarns here can redirect emotional and spiritual power into something that can be beneficial to their followers, and it constitutes the act of Metta (kindness) to both the spirit and the devotee. They regard the making of these items as a regular part of what they do. Life and death are a natural process and if the life of someone can be improved by using these necromantic amulets, then everyone benefits. The makers gain Karma when they help other people, including the spirit within as it gets to earn merit for its actions and the bearer gains an aid to life. The average person in the West may find this difficult to comprehend.

Panneng are one of the strongest necromantic tools in The Thai Occult, and many devotees want to acquire them when they have necessary experience. These are powerful Occult items, and it is best not to be in a position where a Panneng overwhelms them. The makers and distributors will sell Panneng to people who ask for them, and it is up to the buyer to decide whether enough spiritual work has been achieved to be able to handle such an item. In Thailand, the devotee is responsible for their actions, and they are expected to know when they are ready to have a Panneng. These are not toys or things to impress others; they are high occult items. Owning them is an act of responsibility and a mark of being ready for such things. Panneng from the top makers are spiritually stable but very strong, and care must be taken.

The primary attribute bestowed by Panneng is Maha Saneah attraction in all aspects of life; in work, socially and with love. A Panneng envelopes the bearer with their magic and influence to the point where the person will have to remain focused while wearing it, building of their personal Samathi. In all Thai magic, the burden of responsibility lies with the devotee concerning gaining the mastery of the self ¹¹. One of the functions of Kata and the practice of Buddhism is to relax the mind and bring focus; to centre

and be able to withstand the battering that life sometimes brings. Being focused puts people in touch with their instincts, enabling them to make better choices in life and to see and think clearly. All these aspects are part of the spiritual growth associated with the practice of the Thai magical ways.

Panneng also protect against lower spirits and black magic attack. One recent full Panneng had a spiritual load on the back that was the maker's mix of active materials, into which had been pressed a Takrut and 4 brass bulls ¹². The bull is an ancient traditional protection from the black arts that carries a similar spell to a Hoon Payon and to find a Panneng loaded in this way is rare, but the maker usually is working to fill a demand from his devotees. The most important thing with Panneng is to keep on the side of good merit ¹³. Never use it for wrong and follow the basic precepts of life. Make a periodic offering of food, chant the kata often, burn incense and offer fresh water. If the spirit of the Panneng brings boon or grants a wish, reward it with rice wine and more kata, the spirits enjoy alcohol but only offer as a reward or the spirit will become drunk, spoiled and lazy.

Choosing a Panneng ¹⁴

The most important thing when choosing a Panneng is that the devotee is attracted to it, their hand may be almost pulled towards it, and it is also better to find something that feels comfortable. Try not to be drawn by the ego into getting something too scary because of wanting to be perceived as powerful by others and take time in this process. Find something that feels good to wear as something that is spiritually heavy becomes difficult to bear after a while.

When on any chosen spiritual journey it is essential to have an idea as to how Thai magic works and what it can bestow before deciding to own a Panneng. During this process, it is beneficial to meet some of the monks and Ajarns to get a sense of how they are and how their amulets and statues feel. From this journey, it can then be decided as to whom the Panneng should come from and what spirit or deity feels the most compatible. It is now starting to occur where the best makers will make these to order and design the Panneng for the bearer. A process such as this allows the person some control, leading to more trust between the owner and the maker involved.

The maker of these items is vitally important, as the Panneng will have the feeling that his Wicha and skills bestow and there is a vast difference between the Panneng of various makers. It is not only dependent on the Ajarns abilities, but each maker also seems to have their attributes passed into his work. Some Panneng have a light and happy feeling because of the maker, his Wicha and the deity or spirit chosen, whereas others can feel spiritually heavy and create weight in the chest or vibrations. These effects have nothing to do with whether the maker is 'dark' or 'light' or whether he is

'good' or 'bad' as a person; it just is that way, almost as unique as personal genetics. If given the opportunity to meet the makers in question, please do so as they are beautifully magical people and the contact enables a better connection between the Panneng, the maker and the devotee.

The 'Pull' of a Panneng

The spirits in all barang items seem to want more spirits around them, like inviting friends to the party, pushing some devotees into a buying frenzy and this is especially true of Panneng. There is a real encouragement to acquire more of these items until at some point the devotee realises this and resists the pull. For each person, this takes a variable amount of time, and some never get out of this stage, enjoying and feeling comfortable with all these spirits around them.

Ghosts like to have friends as much the living. 15

You don't choose an amulet, an amulet chooses you.

Ajarn Khaw January 2018

1. C Baker *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p1414
2. p616
3. p332
4. From an interview with The Collector
5. ditto
6. From an interview with Ajarn Maha Metta January 2016
7. Suksit Magazine January 2015
8. Interview with a dealer in Panneng, March 2016
9. Interview with an Ajarn February 2016
10. Interview with a Luksit 2016 - sorry to be vague on names but aspects of this art are secret.
11. C Baker - *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p943
12. A renowned maker and the item sold immediately due to its strong protective qualities.
13. Advice offered in every interview undertaken on Panneng
14. From interviews with wearers of Panneng
15. From a well known seller of Panneng

Panneng - an Interview with Ajarn Apichai

Pay attention to this interview please, it is superb. This is how an Ajarn makes a good panneng, and it is one of the most insightful interviews in the book.

To Pruk Saek the Panneng in the photo Ajarn Apichai used his knowledge of the 5 Khan (The Five Aggregates: Corporeality, feeling or sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness), which is one of the reasons that there are five candles. During this process, one candle is in the middle and four are on each corner. The four candles at the corners also represent the four elements of earth, water, wind and fire and the central one represents the spirit. The ritual begins with the four elements, but Ajarn predominantly uses the water and wind elements for blessing Panneng as they help the Panneng acquire the traits of luck and good fortune.

With every Panneng that he makes, Ajarn will first remove any residues of the original spirit and then create a new spirit entity by using the kata for the four elements and the 32 parts of the body. Extra power is then given to the skull pieces by using the heart katas associated with the Prai and ghost elements. When these processes have been completed, Ajarn will then chant the kata to bestow Chok Laab and strong Maha Saneah.

There are two ways to perform the Panneng ritual, and it depends on whether it has a resident spirit or whether that spirit has already moved on. If the original spirit is still present it can be made into an amulet by binding or inviting the spirit to stay, which then means that there is no need to use the four elements or to create a new spirit body. Ajarn Apichai believes that to make a good Panneng it is best to have the skull pieces without a resident spirit, enabling him to build a new spirit and that new spirit will be of a more pure form. With a Panneng that has a remaining soul, it often does not work as well as one built by an Ajarn. For example, if he wants to make a Panneng amulet for affection or attraction but the original spirit in there is an ugly older man, then the piece may not have the power he is aiming for or achieve the right effect. Also, if the Panneng with a resident spirit was not made properly, the spirit may leave, be taken away or pass on to the next realm and the amulet will be less useful than required.

The skull pieces that have a spirit that has been created are constructed from kata and consciousness. The spirit can be made in any form, and it will not leave or be taken away. When inviting or binding the original spirit the offerings are prepared first, and usually, Ajarn will use pork, chicken or fish. Beef, either from a cow or buffalo is not as useful as it is believed that these are animals associated with certain angels that can be seen riding those beasts in old grimoires. Pigs have been used in these rituals since ancient times as a sign of fertility and abundance, but in Thai culture, they usually signify a relaxed and open nature. Alcohol and cigarettes are also offered, which is an ancient practice. Together, these offerings also represent the four elements and 32 parts of the body; pork is flesh, alcohol is water and cigarettes have all the elements of earth, water, wind and fire.



242. Ajarn Apichai blessing his recent Panneng.



243. Ajarn Apichai blessing some old Burmese Panneng.

The best original spirit Panneng are sourced from two types of body. The first is from a person who died on a Saturday and was cremated on a Tuesday and the second is from an accident victim, a Phi Tai Hong ghost. The first type is used because in Thai beliefs, a person who dies on a Saturday and is cremated on a Tuesday will become an aggressive or powerful spirit, while the power from one that came from a sudden death comes from the fact that they have yet to realise that they are dead. If a person has died from natural causes they have had the time to accept that they are about to pass away and the spirit moves on easily. These can still be used for Panneng but the spirit in these has to be made by the Ajarn, and the power of those talismans depends on the abilities of the maker.

To use Ajarn Apichai's Panneng, make offerings of raw pork and cigarettes and pray with one incense stick, which is usually stuck into the pork. Ajarn made the Panneng in the photograph very well indeed, and because of this, the bearer can make a wish without chanting Kata, contact the spirit inside and make the request. Ajarn Apichai's Panneng are for luck, good fortune, Maha Saneah and strong protection from harm. While his skull pieces do not need the bearer to always chant the Kata, they do need him to speak to or talk to them like a friend and become a familiar or confidant. The katas for Panneng are constructed from various Buddhist chants along with more rogue-like elements that have come into use through the countless centuries that these potent magical items have been made.

***Panneng* - an interview with Ajarn Suea**

In the past, Panneng were used by leaders or commanders as protection from malicious black magic during times of strife. The Panneng were worn as a belt buckle, and they brought the protection of strong ghosts to keep them safe from spiritual attack. The use of these has changed over the centuries and are now items desired for their extreme Saneah, but they still protect against black magic through the ghost within.

The best Panneng are from the skulls of a deceased pregnant lady, a drowning victim, and the rarest one (which is also the best) is from a person that has been struck by lightning. In the past the makers only used the skull between the eyebrows and the top of the forehead, meaning that they were often triangular, but today it is difficult to get the best materials. The rarity of the source of correct skulls means that when found, the Ajarn uses the whole of the skull or the price for the single third eye triangular Panneng would be prohibitive.

There is a difference between the Lanna Wicha for Panneng and the Wicha from other regions. Nowadays, from the other areas, the Panneng will be obtained and the spirit will be constructed by the Ajarn using the 32 parts of the body, but in Lanna Wicha, the spirit in the Panneng would be the owner of the skull. If that spirit has passed on, another ghost in the graveyard would be invited in, meaning that true Lanna Panneng do not have a spirit that has been constructed by the Ajarn.

The best way to bucha Ajarn Suea's Panneng is to say the kata and give the correct food, but please eat before offering food to the ghost as it helps the devotee keep them under control.

Burmese Panneng

An interview with Ajarn Sala Boon Khong

The objective of a Panneng, be they from Thailand or Burma is the same, to try and use a ghost as a servant in magical workings. The techniques and knowledge concerning the use of ghosts have been around for a very long time, be it from arm bones, the leg bones or Nam Man Prai, but with Panneng, they use the crown of the skull and the region of the third eye. These are the powerful regions of the skull.

In Burma, a maker of Panneng will choose a skull piece only from a body that was killed through being struck by lightning. The reason for this is that the person was killed by the violence and power of nature itself, the ultimate source of the supernatural. Some people believe that those who have died this way have great virtue, while others think it is terrible. Some believe that at that time of being struck, heaven does not have enough people so they send down lightning to that person so they can rise and work for them in the celestial realms. The Panneng from a person who died this way has great power.

With these Panneng, the maker will decorate it with anything that the residing spirit is afraid of to hold it to performing their given tasks. It is like having a servant. The tasks they can perform can be varied, and that depends on the owner although the spirits in the best examples of these are renowned for the ability to kill others. Ajarn Sala Boon Khong knows that there is a terrible retribution for such actions, but some magicians are able protect themselves enough to be able to perform these murders with impunity. The use of items such as these for violent acts is a throwback to ancient times but it still occurs to this day.

The old Panneng usually have a picture of a demon carved or moulded onto the Panneng, which is usually in the form of what we call a Yak, a type of ogre that is for protection. These have high power in the Burmese traditions as they can even subvert the many forms of tiger magic that originated from the tribes of the region. Some people also think of these skull pieces as a mixing bowl for various Waan elements but really, would you eat or consume something that was mixed in a skull? Doing this would allow the ghost inside, and it can be a difficult process to get them out. Any rubbing inside the skull is part of the contacting the spirit within, where the fingers are rubbed in a clockwise motion but after this action, a spiritual bath with Sompoi would be appropriate.

244. Opposite. Two fine Burmese Panneng, which are now becoming rare.





245. The 5 Head Ghost Statue of Ajarn Khaw. Ajarn is being polite here as he has covered the ghosts stiff cock, which he always displays proudly.

Extreme Prai

There are quite a few styles of Talisman from The Thai Occult practices that can be a surprise to outsiders, either through the ingredients used or the raw nature of the talisman itself. These items and the components in them are steadily becoming more rare, either due to the action of the government and police, the changing practices associated with the dead or even through the competition between the makers in the acquirement of some of the more wildly esoteric ingredients. These competing forces are either forcing the practice of making strong necromantic talismans underground or acting to price the item out of the grasp of most devotees.

Let's start with the amulet that made Ajarn Khaw famous, due to both the abilities of the maker and the associated potency of the rare items contained within it. It would be easy to make this a large section as some wild Prai items are produced in Thailand but to do so would give a biased view of the magic here.

The Five Head Ghost of Ajarn Khaw - Prai Pan Jaak

Before making this amulet, Ajarn Khaw had made many talismans using different spirits so he thought that if he combined five ghosts in one charm, many people would be interested. The problems came when trying to source the best materials to construct the amulet, what he considered to be the scary materials that are the best to use. He waited to collect these materials for two years before assembling the talisman, paying over 100,000 baht for the collection (a considerable amount of money in Thailand). He first constructed the statue in the photograph and put into it some costly magical materials, and it came into being with magic, was born by magic.

Inside the amulet, it has the bone of a pregnant lady who died by drowning in a river (a death by drowning offers one of the most potent sources of power), a pregnant woman who died by being struck by lightning, a monk who was killed by lightning, Prai from a couple who committed suicide together and the bone from many children who drowned in the river. There's also materials from some animals who were struck by lightning, a Takien tree that was struck by lightning, a Bodhi tree that was struck by lightning and there are also Prai materials from a woman who committed suicide while pregnant. Added to this collection were rare herbs for charm from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and some herbs from Burma that are very, very special.

Even though many items were sourced from a poor country like Burma, it still cost Ajarn 100,000 baht and the prices there are cheap! If he had sourced these from Thailand, the cost would have been three or four times that amount. In Thailand, it is now difficult to get this type of materials, but Burma is terrific because there are still many wilder areas where it is possible to get the best products for magic. Many people in Burma die by lightning, and if the people Ajarn knows can find a suitable body, he asks them to take some bone and write the name of the person on the bag along

with how that person died. Another vital ingredient of the five head ghost are the bones from many soldiers, which again is easy to find in Burma because they have been at war for many years.

Ajarn made this amulet to be the King of the Ghosts and consecrated it in a cemetery, blessing it with magic. It has just one spirit but with 5 heads and many devotees have seen him, with his massive body like King Kong and dark skin but they cannot see his face. Some devotees have returned the amulet to Ajarn after witnessing this ghost due to fear, but others realise the power that this amulet holds and keep it, praying to it every day. Ajarn depicted him as having 5 heads to show everyone how strong he is, in many ways like some of the higher gods who are shown as having many heads. Showing him in this way expresses the power that is available, which has come from Ajarn Khaw's abilities and the extraordinary materials it contains.

The name of the Wicha to create this is called Maha Phut, and it is a Wicha that creates a spirit amulet, but in this case, the power depends on the contents of the charm as well as the abilities of the Ajarn. An Ajarn cannot make something powerful if there is no power in the ingredients. Many Masters can make every type of amulet but what is the feedback from the people who wear them? Do they see the ghost? Has it had a good effect on their life? When making the first batch of these amulets a black smoke came to the graveyard when he was blessing them, and Ajarn knew then that it was going to be special. This first run cannot be found now, and they were only 300 baht but later runs have risen to 3,000 baht, purely because of the demand and the capabilities of the amulet. Important magic should be expensive.

Making this amulet started a trend and many Master now make 'many head' amulets, which shows the success of this release. It works this way here in Thailand, design something beautiful, with good power and a new trend begins. Some people have also made a 5 head ghost, but they are not the same as Ajarn Khaw's 5 head ghost even if they use the same ingredients. The magic for these also comes from inside, and all Ajarns are different people. Ajarns also call upon the help of their Masters to consecrate these items, and they also have different powers, so things are never the same.

The Phi Yen Amulet

Due to its extreme nature, it is best to keep the maker of this amulet secret, but it is included because both this amulet and the next are a new Wicha from an experienced magician, which is rare.

What sets this amulet apart is that it contains a section of a young person's arm and the Takrut at the top is meant to represent a finger. It also contains a piece of the clothes worn at the child's funeral service. The small bottle of Turmeric on the back that has been rubbed onto the body of a Phi Tai Tang Glom and left there for one year. The other bottle contains something called Phayon Dam powder that came from one of Ajarns old Masters, and it was passed along to the next generation.



246. *The Phi Yen.*



The body of the Phi Yen is made from the soils from 7 graveyards, 7 salt licks, 7 ant hills, 7 forests, 7 lakes, 7 pieces of earth excavated by crabs, lichen from 7 Buddha statues and the lichen from 7 holes that have been used to tie elephants. The reason that all these had to be collected for this amulet is that each earth is enchanted and protected by a Guardian angel, which adds to the energy, but the strongest source of power in the mixture is the bones of a man who was killed by lightning. Bone from this source is one of the ultimate supernatural elements an Ajarn can find.

The black spot on the head of the Phi Yen is a substance that has come from a very old Ajarn who was famous for making wildly strong Hoon Payon and this substance was used on his famous black Hoon Payon. A Muan Sarn mix such as this is both rare and powerful, which is why it has been used to mark the third eye.

People can use this type of amulet to get whatever they wish for. It can be asked to guard the house, help with work issues or any desire, the essential thing is to connect to the spirit within, strike a bargain with it and then he will work in any way required.

A Yak with a Tongue

This amulet has a similar makeup to the last amulet but on the back of this amulet is a piece of umbilical cord. The umbilical cord represents the greatest amount of love available in any Prai as it passes the love and nutrition from the mother to her child. The Yak face itself has the same ingredients as the last amulet but in the form of a demons face, which is used a lot in the Burmese traditions as it brings power to the item.

Ajarn has also used a child's tongue as part of this amulet, and it represents the power of the amulet to influence other people by talking in their minds. The Wicha for this amulet is his, he created it, and no one has done this before. There were only four made as the materials in this are very difficult to source and the maker considered it a great success. It is similar to the last amulet in that you have to connect to this spirit and make a bargain with it. Look after it, give it merit, and it will take care of its owner.

With some items, especially the rare and powerful ones, what they require most is that the bearer connects to the spirit, makes a bargain with it and then works together at whatever magic is needed. When rare and potent talismans of this kind of extreme Wicha are produced, there is rarely a kata; the maker will give the ghost's name. how they died (if it is known), and the rest is up to the devotee.

247. Opposite. Child's tongues are a very rare form of Prai, so there were only 4 of this amulet made. As a part of this series, there were also some Yak amulets made that had the vagina of a very young child, and there were just 2 made. Extremely rare and potent items.

The Finger Bowls

Ajarn Suea made these, and he followed the Lanna method, but all the regions of Thailand have a Wicha for the use of fingers as a magical tool, as long as they come from the correct corpse. The talismans consist of wooden bowls that contain a handmade See Pung, into which has been placed a male finger and a female finger, both covered in gold leaf. The See Pung was made separately, using a Nam Man Prai from the same body source of the fingers in that bowl, as well a tooth from each corpse that is under the surface. All the Wahn in the See Pung was sourced from a graveyard and the collecting of them corresponded with the necessary astrological alignment. The teeth are present because of the chewing action on any magical job, making these magically tenacious items, working like grinding tough meat, added to which, the fingers themselves can scratch at all the tasks given. One interesting aspect of this type of talisman is the method of collection as some versions of the Wicha insist that the magician bites off the fingers rather than removing them with a knife, as was the case here.

The female finger is from a Phi Tai Tang Glom ghost, from a pregnant lady, and the See Pung in this bowl also contains Nam Man Prai from her unborn child. Ajarn has here used the 32 components of the body practice to create a new and potent spirit that has control, which is common when using such compelling sources of magic. The male finger came from a well-known gambler and womaniser who died in a terrible road accident (making him a Phi Tai Hong ghost). With these fingers, it is also vital that they come from the dominant hand of the person. In this case, the male fingers are from the right hand and the female from the left. When the task of constructing these was completed, both bowls were then consecrated in a graveyard at an astrologically significant time.

It is essential when working with such powerful items that merit is offered to the spirit of each and Tamboon must be made when they grant a magical wish (the easiest way to do this is by giving to charity). While Ajarn does pass these on separately, he recommends that they are used as a pair as they offer a balance in the practice of working with the talismans. The female ghost is best for Saneah and wishes, while the male is best for gambling and windfall luck and each spirit should be sought with the mind. They can also be used together and are some of the strongest items available in The Thai Occult as it brings together the two most powerful ghost types in the Thai system as well as both sexes, making them highly adaptable pieces.

248. Opposite. The finger bowls are special enough but below is the finger from the dominant hand of a female suicide victim.





249. Above, is the full rope from a suicide that had been sold on by a Policeman who had been at the scene. They can also come from ambulance workers, but sourcing these is now becoming more difficult as the country modernises and access to such materials is restricted.

Even if the Ajarn in questions is trusted completely, when passing on items such as this, photographic evidence adds value. Such was the case with the photograph for the left here, where a name, reason for suicide and an image of the person was provided. The rope in this was actually speaker wire, which was cut into sections and sold as amulet cords. Knowing his name allows direct access to the spirit, enabling the devotee to make deals with him for tasks in return for merit and offerings.

Suicide ropes are now becoming very rare indeed as they are commonly cremated with the victim.

Items from a Suicide

There is an inherent supernatural power within items that are associated with a suicide, as with Ajarn Khaw Phra Ngang on page 381 but there are other items that can be used from such tragic events.

Suicide Rope

As in many forms of necromancy and spirit worship, any item that has been used to kill someone through suicide or murder is a source of supernatural power. On rare occasions, a bullet that has passed through a person's brain has been made into an amulet, but for obvious reasons, these can only come from a very trusted source. The rope that has been used for a suicide is more highly desired, but they should come with the name of the person who killed themselves, the date it happened and hopefully, photographic evidence. In this way, the devotee acquiring such an item can be assured of its authenticity.

These items rarely have a kata, and instead, the devotee relies on working directly with the spirit and making a bargain with it to care for it with offerings and offer merit whenever a wish gets granted. The person working with such items needs to be secure within their practices, have excellent Samathi and excellent protection from this type of ghost but if all that is in place, many report amazing results from such objects.

Suicide ropes can come in two forms. Firstly, as the full rope that includes the noose and to use this, the devotee will place the noose around their neck while contacting and working with the spirit in question. The other way is for the rope to be made into sections that can then be used to hold an amulet, creating a dual purpose ensemble of necromantic tools. One problem is that as a form of suicide, hanging is now less popular than it used to be and the gun is the go to weapon of choice. The bullets from suicides can be used but authenticating that it is the actual bullet is difficult for the Ajarn, who does not want to be accused of lying about what he has sold.

Besides ropes and cords for hanging, the knives used for suicides can be either used as a connection to the ghost, or even as a Miit Mhor. Knives used in murders are of particular interest in some Western forms of magic, but are not collected in Thailand, despite the efforts of some practitioners.

The Finger (photo on the previous page)

This has many uses but primarily it acts like a finger acts, by pointing. The bearer uses it like a wand, pointing at what is desired or what he wants the spirit to work on. Asking that the spirit helps with capturing someone's heart or persuading people to do certain things in business; there are a multitude of uses, only limited by the persons imagination or skills. Babies fingers were also used this way in the past, but are now exceptionally rare.

THE LOAD

The load is a term that has been invented by Western devotees of the Thai magical arts to describe the items either under a statue or at the back of an amulet, because in Thai they would say, 'underneath'. This word does not convey the importance of the items added to any spiritual talisman as they add power to it. The items added can also aid the devotee to decide whether the statue or amulet is directed in the way which they require, whether it is fit for the purpose they seek. For instance, if a Mae Per amulet has a dice placed in her vagina, it shows that the charm is directed towards luck while taking risks, either in gambling or business ventures. If she had a ball of Leklai in a similar place, the amulet would be more protective of the devotee. Any item contained within the charm affects the quality of magic, the strength of magic and the direction the magic is focussed and this should be considered before acquiring a talisman.

When an amulet is released onto the market, accompanying it will be a paper with a list of the items present in the piece and the primary element of Athan will be shared by the Ajarn. For instance, with a recent Roop Pan to Phra Ngang from Ajarn Khaw, the power for that piece came from the fact that the branch it was carved from had been used for three suicides. Three people had killed themselves in nature by hanging themselves from something natural, and that is a high source of Athan power. Yes, there were also items in the load but the use of the branch was the main selling point, and it was why the five statues made sold in just a few days. Much can be gleaned from the written descriptions for amulets and statues alike, and this section hopes to help all devotees of The Thai Occult 'read' a Thai talisman.

Prai Materials

Prai materials are sourced from the bodies of people who died in specific ways and at various stages of their lives and bring strong magical power. All talismans that contain Prai are thought to have an advantage over non-Prai amulets because the inclusion of Prai adds a robust spiritual battery. Prai talismans are believed to work faster and have more clout, but it is not as clear-cut as that as it also depends on the maker and what is being sought from the item itself. Having Prai items does not automatically mean that the devotee's life will improve by doing nothing, but powerful amulets help those who engage in life by giving them an advantage through luck and attraction. It is also not an Abracadabra effect, where everything the devotee wishes for is suddenly granted; a thought pattern considered extremely childish by the Thais. Work also needs to be done by the bearer of Thai talismans and as one Ajarn said, 'If you want money, work harder, if a person wants attraction, make more of an effort to educate and enhance themselves and if they want love, be a better person so anyone who likes them can be at ease in their company and in time, offer their heart'. From this, Ajarn was saying that people should improve themselves as their life improves through magic. Magic often acts as the first step up for the devotee, and it then also supports the rest of the journey.



250. Ghosts can help bring wealth.



251. A suicide amidst the ghosts of aborted babies.
The Hell Gardens of Wat Mae Kaet Noi, Chiang Mai.

The process of the way Prai works has to be taken seriously and merit needs to be made and put back into the 'bank' from which was borrowed the boon or good luck (please remember that merit is achieved through conscious good deeds). Prai amulets are considered as much a style of spiritual growth as any in the Thai Buddhist tradition, and it is best to temper the desires and greed inherent in most people to achieve a 'middle way'. Dedication to kata is essential as kata generally seeks refuge and protection from the Buddha, and an overall view of our existence needs to be gained so as not to ask too much of these items. They are there as an aid to growth rather than the devotee expecting Gandalf to appear to make them gorgeous and wealthy with a wave of his phallic wand.

Amulets with Prai are made by most of the makers of magical items within Thailand, including famous monks, which marks a critical point in that the philosophical boundaries and ideas surrounding these items are both adaptable and fluid. One of the most respected Buddhist monks in Thai history, Phra Somdej fashioned a Panneng from the skull of Mae Nak. More recent highly magical monks such as Luang Phor Pina are famous for their powerful Prai amulets such as a Mae Per carved from the hip bone of a pregnant woman and the tongue of a child in an amulet that works like a strong Prai Krasip. Some Buddhists see this as a result of a temptation for the monk to show their powers, while others see it only as a natural result of having those powers and wanting to grant boon to the bearer of the items in question. Magic is presently a sticky subject within Thailand, and recent moves by the Sangha here to limit both the belief in magic and the use of such materials is slowly having an effect.

In many of the Prai amulets, a piece of actual bone can be seen, and it is this that the spirit recognises as being familiar from its old existence, and resides in it. A bone powder can also be used in the same way and can be found either in a phial or stuffed inside a Takrut. The Prai element can also be a part of the general matrix of the amulet, and in many cases, it is noted in the description where these materials have been sourced.

Bone of a police officer who died in the line of duty who had many wives.

The most important ingredient is bone powder from 108 ladies that has been blessed for 1 year.

Powdered ashes from a woman who died on a Saturday and was cremated on a Tuesday.

Prai from woman who died on Tuesday and was cremated on Saturday.

The powdered ashes of children from nine urns.

Bone powder from a lady who died by suicide.

The source of the bone is of paramount importance because much of the resulting products depends on the supernatural nature of the Prai. Thailand is a country where most people are cremated, and access to the bones of people who died in a specific way is not too difficult, especially if one of the workers with the dead is the follower of an Ajarn, monk or spiritual Master. The same goes for access to child materials for Kuman Thong and Luk Krok's due to the high rate of abortion, and much of the practice being carried out in secret. It would not be too difficult for the makers to have access to these materials should they have a devotee who works in the clinics, at a crematorium or with a body post-mortem. It is not only bone that can provide a home for the residing ghost and many other corpse materials are often used, which are then the Prai element, regarded as necessary for an effective amulet.

Hair - Amulets and statues containing the hair taken from a corpse have fans and collectors, and offer a personal connection to the source of the hair, often to a rather creepy effect. The hair can come from the head or pubic region depending on the Wicha of the maker and the desired effect.

Teeth - Yes, teeth (*see page 462*). While rare, some amulets contain the teeth of a corpse to evoke the action of chewing and gnawing at a problem in a magical fashion; helping to masticate and digest the changes that need to occur either within the bearer or on his behalf.

Finger Nails or even a full finger - Is nothing safe on a corpse? A full finger from a suitable corpse can also be used as a powerful wand.

Skin - Often used in Inn Khoo Prai amulets due to skin being an erogenous zone.

Tongue - As mentioned on the previous page, there is one very famous amulet from Luang Phor Pina that contains the tongue of a child in oil, and its power is legendary amongst collectors of these things. The tongue is the conduit through which the spirit of the child talks to the bearer.

Breast - Pieces of dried breast are used with strong female deities such as Mae Per, 9 Tail Fox or the Thai representations of Kali. It looks a little like a brown chewing gum, and when held it is as hard as amber. It evokes the way of feeding the young, giving nutrition.

Corpse Cloth - The cloth that is used to wrap the dead is considered to be a Prai material because of the chance that it will have absorbed some of the fluids and oils that seep from a body after death. Again, items with this style of Prai have many collectors, and it is regarded as an effective source of Athan. Corpse cloth is also used as a talisman in itself, where an Ajarn will use it to create a Pha Yant Prai, and the more stained this cloth is, the better. The source for this cloth is generally the body bags used when collecting accident victims from the road and the power within them can be quite shocking. One famous Ajarn acquired a pile of these cloths and was



252. There are many forms of Prai. The piece above is a Pha Yant, drawn on a very stained piece of shroud that was collected from an accident victim.
Necromantic art by Phor Noi Tan.



253. These beautifully scripted pieces are known as grip bones, and can be used to hold while meditating, to contact the spirit directly.

considering making one into shorts, even though they were so strong that they were difficult to touch. That Ajarn has no fear, but that's what comes with having been a monk, and he thought the shorts would make him happy.

Sai Sin Thread - This is the blessed thread that is used to either bind the hands of a corpse or to connect the corpse to the monks present, relatives and friends of the deceased during a funeral rite. The spiritual energy of the monk or Ajarn has been passed through this thread, making it a useful source of magic in both amulets and statues. Sai Sin helps protect an area and acts to cordon it off from outside influences.

Coffin Nails - These are also considered to be a Prai item due to them holding the lid of the coffin closed, in close proximity to the deceased. Particularly associated with Inn Khoo Prai, but can also be found in the load of many amulets and even as an amulet in its own right.

Nam Man Prai - Often present in talismans because of its power, usually in a phial pressed into the back of the amulet or the base of a statue.

While most Thai talismans rely upon pieces of bone or corpse products, some magical items here in Thailand are made from a bone itself, more often than not from the arm or leg due to them being used for hard work. These are used to grip in the hand when meditating and working with the spirit in question and can be beautifully decorated, which is an act that involves strong Samathi. The decoration is also the invocation and written in both Khom and Lanna script, depending on the region it was made.

An Interview about Prai with Ajarn Ting

Besides the usual sources that have already been discussed concerning the use of Prai materials, there are other forms commonly quoted. One of these is that the deceased must die on a Saturday and be cremated on a Tuesday, which renders their Prai supernatural, providing more options for the Ajarn to attain good materials. Other extreme supernatural sources originate from dying by being hit by lightning or by drowning as these are both deaths from nature, and in nature itself. These are also known in Thai as *Tai Prai* (prai deaths) and they are an accessible source of incredibly strong supernatural materials that can be used by skilled Ajarns.

I will not use any bone where I do not know the cause of death or the source of the Prai.

Ajarn Ting September, 2017.

The sex of the person the Prai was sourced from is also important. A male source is used for Khun Paen and Phra Ngang, a female source for Mae Per, and a child's remains for Kuman Thong. These are just examples, but the character of the person before they died is also important. If the man was a playboy, he would be useful in making a Phra Ngang, and if a good

gambler, he could be used for other specific types. A prostitute is very useful when she dies a Prai death as she can be used for Mae Per, and pretty much all the female uses. With extreme sources of Prai, such as when a monk is killed by lightning, that would be best used for Panneng, which is actually the same with anyone killed in this way. Ajarn Ting used to make Panneng from a mixture of 32 different bone sources, which mirrors the parts of the body and Ajarn accordingly made 32 of them, otherwise it would weaken the power. There are many very odd types of Prai that people do not know about, in the same way as the 32 body Panneng.

A Talisman made by Prai (254. *Opposite. Ajarn Ting and the See Pung by Prai*)

Near Mae Hong Son, there was a monk called Kruba Mai Hong, and a long time ago he made a very special See Pung using the body of a Phi Tai Tang Glom, a lady who died while pregnant. Kruba found a very good looking man, and got him to dig up the corpse. This man then sat behind the body and held its hands to mix a See Pung in a monk's bowl, so while it does not contain Prai, it has a Prai spirit within it because the Phi Tai Tang Glom ghost effectively made it. The lady had to die while holding her first-born in her stomach and that firstborn had to be a son to fulfil the demands of this rare Wicha. Even though the See Pung only has Wahn and many herbs, the feeling is that the ghost is very present and she can be called upon at any time. A See Pung like this has never been made again as the process is both challenging and dangerous, and the ones here are from a disciple of the old monk, who died about 60 years ago.

This See Pung cannot be used on anyone unless it is OK that he or she will spend their life together with the devotee. The person who has this amulet can only ask for either one of two wishes, and that is it, then the wish never changes. The wish can be either for good business or love, but Ajarn Ting does not recommend it for love as the bearer may get swamped (*laughter*). The See Pung from Kruba Mai Hong was made a long time ago and is a legendary substance. It is usually sold in a quantity that is like the head of a match, it is that strong, but here it has filled a small silver box. The ghost who made this See Pung may also come to the dreams of the bearer, but the relationship between the ghost and the substance is not the same as any usual Prai amulet. She likes to be fed regularly and an offering of fresh water every day. She also likes perfume and sometimes, when things go well, apply some gold leaf to the case.

The See Pung is considered to be a Prai because it was made by Prai, even though there is no Prai in it. Ajarn also blessed this to include the name of the person who will keep this See Pung, to introduce that person to the Phi Tai Tang Glom ghost.

As far as child Prai goes, a dead child is classed as a very young Phi Tai Hong, and it is both the age and the style of death that renders child materials to be extremely powerful. In Ajarn's opinion, the best child materials come from a natural miscarriage or stillbirth, rather than from abortion as it





255. *The pitter patter of tiny feet, and other extreme Prai.*



conforms to the laws of nature. The same is true for any animal, not just human beings, a natural death enables them to be made into Luk Krok (here Ajarn gets out some fetus from a cat that he will soon make into a Luk Krok Meow). The real Luk Krok has to emerge with the umbilical cord, and he considers it essential that a baby without the umbilical cord is not good to make into a Luk Krok, even if it is a stillbirth.

Ajarn Ting makes incredible items because he is strict with his Wicha. When a suitable body becomes available to make a Luk Krok (and this can be any animal as well as human), the first thing one should do is to put it into formaldehyde or the body will rot and Ajarn dries these indoors rather than in the sun as otherwise, they turn black.

Here, the question was posed to Ajarn about the uses of specific parts of the body in an amulet, for instance a tooth to give a chewing action to the magic, to make it tenacious.

He replied. It makes no difference as to the action of the parts used. If it is Athan it will work in the same way, and the rest is only marketing or a good story from the seller. Ajarn Ting is a Lanna Ajarn and he speaks directly,

It is the source of the Prai that is important. It is that that provides the power
Ajarn Ting 2018

People make assumptions as to what various parts of the body can be used for, but really, it makes no difference. Hair, fingers, nails, teeth, eyeballs, they are all the same as long as the source corpse is good, but using these various parts can be helpful in giving an amulet a particular look, which can appeal to different people.

The Earths - an interview with Ajarn Apichai

Earths from many places have a power residing within and all the earths collected to use in magical talismans contain the power of the earth goddess, Mae Thoranee. There are different powers within the earths collected from different places, and here are some examples. The soil from a temple has an angel spirit that guards and protects the Wat, the earth from the graveyard has the ghosts and spirits that haunt the place. The soil that is excavated by crabs is also considered an Athan, soil from a salt lick is also Athan as it provides essential minerals to animals like elephants that cannot be found elsewhere.

The soil in a rice field represents the fertility of the land, and it holds the guardian spirit of the fields. The soil from a market is another common content for amulets, because it carries with it the energy of people who come to the market to spend money. The land in this case is considered to have the power to attract people to spend, akin to the attribute Khaa Khaay. Soils from a shore are used because in the past the transportation was mainly by rivers, with exports and imports going near and far. The soils from this place

have the energy of commerce and carry the attraction for people to come to that place. Foreigners come, strangers come, and then the region grows, and everyone prospers. Every soil from different areas have the elements of earth, wind, fire and water and these elements are also used in the construction of all magical talismans. Soil gives life to trees, to people and then when we die we go back to the soil, enriching the earth again. It is a constant cycle.

Other items in The Load

Many other items can be put into the load and this depends on the Wicha of the maker, the skills of the Ajarn and the availability of what are considered to be supernatural items.

Takrut are THE main item for activation of an amulet that is usually placed at the back. These hold both spells, and heart katas (condensed kata) and Takrut hold more power than is generally realised by devotees who want strong Prai. A good Takrut can really fizz in the hand and are highly valued in Thailand, but as yet, few understand them in the outside world.

Dice represent the amulet's efficiency with risk-taking rather than with gambling itself. According to the Ajarns interviewed, no spell can help solely with gambling or the lottery because if it were that easy, they would all make one amulet and then retire on the proceeds. This misunderstanding seems to have come about through the aggressive marketing of some of the products within The Thai Occult and promoting them as being good with gambling to help sales. There are even websites for this purpose, but the Ajarns that have expressed an opinion on this matter suggest that the sellers are misrepresenting the quality of Chok Laap, which is to lift the general fortunes, not for winning at roulette.

Glass Eyes are a contemporary addition to the back of amulets and under both Panneng and statues, but this is a relatively recent occurrence. The maker here is suggesting that the talisman can see into more than this reality or that that amulet is looking out for opportunities that may arise. These glass eyes can bring great beauty and presence to the talisman in question, but they serve no other purpose. Sometimes, very rarely, a real eye is used from a Luk Krok or young child.

Samlit figures. Yellow metal figures are often pressed into the back of other amulets that have either been blessed on their own or as part of the consecration of the whole piece. These figures are of Samlit, a metal that holds the blessing well, and it is also used to make both in statues and amulets. The most common ones are the Inn Khoo, Phra Ngang, Mae Per and the Paladkhik but many can be used, with money spiders and Jing Jok lizards also being common.

Seeds. Technically, these are a Muan Sarn, but are included here because the section on Muan Sarn is going to be complex enough. The most



256. (Top Photo) Some of the most powerful Takrut are written on the vagina.
 (Bottom Photo) A fine example of the use of glass eyes, in this case on the rear of a full Panneng (note the eye sockets).



257. The Muan Sarn that was used to make the oil during Ajarn Khaw's Wai Kru.

common seed seen in amulets is called Maet Makham, easily spotted with its post box red colour. The trees that produce these used to be common in Thailand until the hippies came and found out that these seeds are a mild narcotic. Because of the hippies, the Police removed many from this land and they are now scarce.

Skulls, when seen, can either be plastic, bone or Samlit metal and denote the presence of Prai, or the ability within the amulet to be able to see more than this realm.

Prai materials are often put at the back of an amulet to disguise the type of talisman it is, to be more discrete. The most common Prai found in this position is the bone chip, but presently, a bone powder is becoming popular because it is difficult to determine what it is if mixed into the matrix. Devotees who look for good Prai talismans generally want their Prai to be seen and will eagerly buy any amulet where a top source of Prai is used, such as a Luk Krok's hand, the finger of a Phi Tai Tang Glom, teeth, coffin nails, pieces of a child's arm, chunks of Panneng etc.

Glass Phials are another common addition, and here they may contain Prai materials or pure Wahn materials. The Prai will often be in the form of Nam Man Prai or bone powder but can also be a Luk Krok Oil, fat from a corpse or even turmeric that has been spread onto a dead body to absorb the Prai element. The Wahn can be any of the multitude of oils for Saneah and Metta such as Kai Daeng oil.

Woods are also put at the back of amulets, but they have to be very special indeed. The woods that hold supernatural power are discussed in the section after this one on the Muan Sarn used in The Thai Occult.

The Muan Sarn in The Thai Occult

The herbal lore of The Thai Occult is enormous and will be covered in a single book when the top Ajarns are willing to be interviewed on the subject, and time permits. In the meantime, the author is collecting all the old books on the Muan Sarn that can be found, every single one of which is out of print, and none are available in bookshops even if reading Thai is not a problem. Primarily, these books are about which plants are the best to grow in the home to bring a peaceful and loving environment, attract business, enchant lovers and bestow Metta. Some of these plants can also be used as ingredients in amulets, and the interest in growing these arose on moving to Chiang Mai to finish this book, as there is a market to the north of the city that sells magical plants. Yes, a market that sells magical plants.

The idea of growing magical plants was exciting; to be able to see how they grow, how to care for them and the energy they hold. The author had once been kindly given some bulbs to grow Kuman Thong flowers by Ajarn Ting, but they got confiscated at the airport as nothing was allowed to be taken on the plane that has some soil on them, so they got seized. Losing them

was particularly devastating because Ajarn Ting had explained how to grow them, and how to bless the water. Many plants have an associated kata, and these were from Ajarn's garden, so they had been grown in an environment of magic, and had been given the correct loving care.

Many Ajarns grow the most common magical plants at home, as well as some of the rare ones that they appreciate and can use in their works. The plants chosen must offer the attributes they usually require for their talismans, but the range of magical plants is so vast that the Ajarn would need many acres to grow all the types they know, although some of the strongest and most desirable plants will only grow in the wilds. The reference books found on the herbal system often say that there are 108 Wahn, but 108 is just a number that means 'great' rather than referring to how many there are. Yes, there are the common ones (and there's way more than 108 of those) but some will only grow in the forests, and some bloom for only one night, which is the time the flower needs to be picked. Many of the environments that these rare plants need have now disappeared in Thailand because the woodlands are managed, giving rise to Burma and Cambodia being the only sources available. There are people in those countries who survive by finding products for the Thai Ajarns that are no longer available in Thailand, and this also includes the rare and powerful forms of Prai.

An adventurous spirit helps with finding the weird and wonderful places in Thailand. There are many markets where it is possible to buy magical plants, and each of the sellers is, of course, utterly charming, but all the descriptions are in the Thai language. On recognising some of the plants in the photographs and chatting to the seller, it was possible to replace the lost Kuman Thong bulbs and in addition, to buy some Wahn Kai Daeng (Red Chicken Plants) as well as six other famous additives to amulets to try and grow them around the home. On the long trip back, six sacks of cow and pig shit compost were also added to the load, meaning that the smell in the car was a little earthy.

After planting the bulbs in large pots and watering them in, the first thing that happened was that next door's black chicken dug up the Red Chicken bulbs. There was some chicken competition going on here, and the black chicken was in danger of ending up in a Thai Green Curry. The chicken fight went on for weeks and not one single bulb showed any sign of growing, which was odd as everything grows like crazy in the tropics.

One of the great things about being a foreigner in Thailand is the ability to amuse the locals, in this case, the Ajarns of Chiang Mai. With no action in the growing becoming apparent, it was best to ask Ajarn Suea as to what the problem may be, and on showing him the signs in Thai of the bulbs purchased, he started to roll around in laughter. These were bulbs that had already been grown for magic, and then dried, ready for use in either making oils or amulets, so there's no way they would grow. There was then a small period of recovery from the disappointment related to the fact that there were not going to be magical plants around the home, but that short



258. *Waan Sabu Luat* for *Kong Grapan*, and it is fed with blood.



259. Waan Kuman Thong in the garden of Ajarn Ting.



260. And Waan Kuman Thong being sold in the magical plant market.



261. There's no mistaking that arm.
A photo from when Ajarn Ting was explaining the uses of Ma Krua Baa.

period of time was enough for Ajarn to share the comedy on the phone with other Ajarns, and he still giggles about it to this day.

The one thing that this steep learning curve did enable was the breaking open of these bulbs while redistributing the compost on the garden. Opening the Kuman Thong bulb felt like a Thai amulet as there was a feeling of Saneah, which was quite strong, and while at the Wai Kru of Ajarn Khaw, the Ajarns present made a Saneah oil together using the chopped up pieces of similar bulbs, at which Ajarn Suea was smiling, with a glint in his eye. The other thing that has happened since this episode is that my partner, Bon has asked that no magical plants be grown near the house because they can affect personal relationships, and can be weird in general. There goes the idea of having a tree at the front of the house that has an associated ghost that serves to protect the property, (but does need to be fed blood regularly) and the desire to have a Ngiew Dam tree at the back. The magical trees and plants can have as much of an effect on the area they grow in as they can in an amulet, and they can tamper with the balance of personal relationships if the correct care is not taken.

At some point in this journey into The Thai Occult, there will be a Westerner who receives the offer to become a Luksit, an apprentice to a magician and then the herbal lore would open. Whether an Ajarn would ever interview on the subject to any depth cannot be said at this point in the understanding of the art, and it may take an outsider to open this aspect to the world entirely.

Making Wooden Statues - an interview with Ajarn Suea

Ajarn Suea follows some ancient rules about which woods he can use to make a statue and his works have clout. Most of the Roop Pan in the photograph are now on the author's personal altar, and this interview was eagerly anticipated! Please read the words of Ajarn Suea, this is an excellent interview but as with many of the times he was interviewed, there is always the sense that what is being given is but a drop in the ocean of knowledge held by Ajarn.

The making of a statue is done with certain types of wood, such as:-

Teak - Maai Sak - Sak in Thai sounds like the word that means rank, title or status although it is not written in the same way. It is such a hard wood that it is also used to make a Sak Yant rod as it keeps a very fine point.

Tamarind wood - Maai Makhaam - The word Khaam sounds like the Thai word Graeng Khaam, which means imposing, something which has a power that is fearful.

Star Gooseberry Wood - Maai Mayom - This sounds like the word Niyom, which is the attribute of popularity and it also means 'to admire'. This is the wood that is used to make the collection of sticks that monks and Ajarns dip into holy water to spray onto others during a blessing.

Black Bombax Ceiba wood - Maai Ngiew Dam - This wood is believed to protect against black magic and in Thai legend, it is the tree that is climbed to get out of hell. It is quite difficult to find because it is regarded as only growing in magical forests, and it is protected by a guardian angel.

Black Varnish wood - Maai Rak - Rak in Thai means love.

Other woods that can be used are from the Bodhi tree or the wood from any tree that has been struck by lightning. A tree struck by lightning is believed to have been killed by the lightning from a god, and these trees are great for making amulets for protection against evil. If a tree is struck by lightning in the middle of the tree, and may even be split in half, it is very good for making the handles of a Miit Mhor. If a tree is struck by lightning in such a way that it explodes the bark off the tree while killing it, this wood is superb for making statues of Yak's, an underworld demon known as Waesuwan. Huge statues of Waesuwan can see at the gates of Wat Po in Bangkok and is considered to be akin to the king of the demons with the power over ghosts and things of an evil nature. Any wood that was struck by lightning and fell across the river is excellent for making a Tiger statue as it has the power to pass on an imposing nature to their owner. There are many types of this wood, and a myriad of usages.

As with lightning woods, to be able to use any wood, the tree has to die in a certain way, an Ajarn cannot just go and cut these woods. If he wants to use the Star Gooseberry Tree, it has to be a significant example, and the type of this wood that can be used for making statues is called *Mayom Tai Prai*, which means that it has died in the most useful magical way by falling across a road or a river. For another type of Mayom Tai Prai wood, the tree has to die from parasite plants or trees that have grown on top of it, and it died while still standing. This wood can be used for statues of a Kuman Thong, a Nang Prai or a Nang Kwak as well as an amulet that is made to provide an element of Metta to the bearer.

The Pujow Samingprai statue in the photograph over the page is made from Teak wood, and the tree grew on top of a termite mound, (which is very rare to find) and when one appears, Ajarn will make many Lersi statues. This tree has to have no insects within the wood as well as no termites, and it is considered to be one of the best woods to use. Any statue or amulet made from this wood is powerful, and Ajarn also uses it to create a Nang Kwak or Chu Chok, and other charms that help with business luck. This teak wood is also particularly suitable for people who work in the public services as it encourages a rising in the rank of that person, raising them up akin to promoting them. Ajarn's Lersi statues all use Teak wood from this source because of this attribute, which is called *Serm Baramee*.

If someone has a statue of the Ruesi at their place of work, it will help protect the person and their business from any black magic cast their way; it bounces away curses. The correct way to bucha the Lersi statues are with bananas and coconuts on the Buddhist days or on a Thursday, which is

Lersi day. In Thailand, there are four Buddhist days per month, the full moon day, two half-moon days, and the black moon day when there is no moon. Luckily, all Thai calendars have these days marked to make it easy for devotees of both Buddhism and magic.

A Mae Per is usually made from Teak wood that has fallen across the road, which brings Saneah and Metta to the statue. If Ajarn wants to make a Nang Kwak, the ultimate way is to use Ngiew Dam wood as it regarded as the king of woods, and it brings Metta. Ajarn used to create a Waesuwan statue from the Maai Tan Phi wood (Bombay Ebony), which is a super rare wood. The wood from this tree is very black, and the tree itself is difficult to see in the daytime as it looks like other trees, but at night it has a natural luminance. Ajarn used to enjoy walking the woods at night to look for this tree when he was able-bodied, but now it is more difficult for him. This tree has a special scent, and when it is rubbed with the fingers, they smell rotten.

Each of the woods listed here have their magical properties within them as long as it dies correctly and each can be used for most spirits and deities, depending on what attributes the Ajarn decides he wants in that statue. The Thai magical lore for the woods is extensive, and not many Ajarns know them all. Another magical wood is called *Maai Faak*, which is a parasite tree that grows in the recesses of big trees. It eventually grows higher than the host tree to the point where it steals its sunlight and can subsequently mean the death of the host. The wood from Maai Faak is best for a Hoon Payon Phi that is used for cursing and causing harm.

There are many kinds of wood used to make statues, but the most common ones also include *Maai Phayung* (Siamese Rosewood and the meaning of Phayung in Thai is to support or assist) and its primary attribute as a wood is to lift the fortunes of the person who has it. The tree itself is considered sacred with magical characteristics of its own even if grown in the garden, but an Ajarn usually uses this wood to make talismans and puts a kata into it to boost its natural attributes. This wood can be used for anything.

The Tamarind wood (*Maai Makhaam*) is used to make Buddhist beads, but the wood has to come from an ancient tree that has gained the black core that comes with age. It is this wood that is the best to make the strings of 108 beads that are worn and used by Buddhists for counting kata. These are then known as Pakham Beads. This wood can also be used for the handles of knives or its sheath, but it is challenging to carve, and this purpose is generally reserved for the weapons carried by Royalty.

Gahlong Wood (The Snow Orchid Tree) is used to make amulets for Metta Maha Niyom and is excellent for attracting others. 'Long' in Thai can mean lost through allure, lost because someone is so beautiful, and this meaning decides its uses in the magical system.

The Takien Tree (The Ironwood Tree) has a guardian spirit and is considered to be a strongly haunted tree. It is believed that if a Takien tree has a lot of

ghosts living within it, the tree itself will drip out an oil, which can be used in Mae Takien amulets. This wood is especially good when making a Nang Prai or a Hong Prai statue, and the extra spirit in the Takien wood gives these great power. This wood lasts for a very long time when submerged in water, and even when it has been buried in the ground. Even if it is submerged for decades, it is barely affected. This tree is so haunted that even when buried, the resident ghost remains active enough to be able to influence the living. There are stories of the ghost appearing in people's dreams and telling them where the tree is so that they can dig it up. Not all Takien trees have a strong spirit, and the Ajarn has to check first before using that wood to make an amulet.

Another type of wood used is where a tree has one trunk that then splits into two, creating the appearance of open legs, and a pattern between the branches that looks like a vagina. As this tree ages, the 'tree vagina' becomes a place for ghosts to reside, and this type of ghost is called a Phi Song Nang, a Two Lady Ghost. According to the magical lore of Thailand, if anyone uses a strong type of this wood as a pillar in the house, all the males residing there will die. Any tree can grow in this way and gain supernatural power; it is a tree that grows in a certain way rather than any specific wood.

All the types of spiritual woods mentioned here can be used for making a statue, but what is considered to be the ultimate source is if the bucha is made from the wood of a tree that had been a parasite of another tree. The tree that it grows on has to be a magical wood, and the parasite tree (not a vine but an actual tree) has to kill the host. This phenomenon usually happens when a bird has a seed in its droppings, and it starts to grow in a recess in a large tree. As an example, if a parasite tree grows on a Maai Ngiew Dam tree and kills it, the wood from the parasite tree is one of the top sources of power available in the Thai Occult system to make a statue. Due to all the possible combinations of trees that this can happen with, this dramatically increases the types of wood that can be used for magical purposes, especially when the woods that are grown in the graveyard are taken into account as well.

There will be more on the magical woods of Thailand from Ajarn Suea at some point in the future.

Opposite Photograph

262. Ajarn Suea with four hand made statues that are now part of the author's altar





263. This Miit Mhor was the knife used by Luang Phor Pina to cut open bodies.
It was blessed each time it was used, bringing life to the knife.

Nam Man Prai

Nam Man Prai (which translates as 'Ghost Oil') is one of the most potent necromantic tools available in the Thai Occult system and is the stuff of legend due to its potency, the effects on those anointed, and the stories around its creation. There are many practices involving this oil, some of which are decidedly aggressive or dark in nature. One of them is the belief that a single drop of a good Nam Man Prai in the food of someone desired can make a sex slave of them ¹ (although there is also said to be a risk of mental derangement). This Prai oil has also been known to be added to the ink when making Sak Yant for particularly effective magical tattoos ² but the downside here is that you are placing a ghost within the bloodstream, which can then be very difficult to remove. There are two ways that this is used in Sak Yant, with the first being that an Ajarn can sometimes use it to capture a client and secondly, by choice, but most Ajarns will either not use it or only perform the Sak Yant in this way after lengthy consultation.

Nam Man Prai can be used to help capture the heart of the people the practitioner desires, and a small amount is put on the skin of that person. Nam Man Prai can also be part of any shrine as part of a talisman to raise its power or even on its own, where it is then considered a bucha (a type of statue). All Prai materials add 'extra battery' to any item, but a good Nam Man Prai is deemed to be able to raise the potency beyond anything comparable ³. It is THE charm oil, and it is in constant demand because of this, despite the cost or any possible negative consequences.

The most potent type of Nam Man Prai is a mixture of sacred herbs, and body fluids ritually obtained from a pregnant woman who died an unnatural death (suicide or accident by drowning is the most desired source). Due to the loss of life through either violence, accident or personal misery, the spirit is very potent and vengeful, because it suffers from the grief of having not given birth to the child, as well as the loss of life. These types of death instil emotional energy that the maker can work with, making it an incredibly powerful oil, and a known source can add significant value to the finished product ⁴. Various lineages suggest a different amount of time has to elapse after the death for the most effective oil ⁵. One Ajarn of repute works at the crematorium and produces some of the best Nam Man Prai available today, but he does have to be very careful when performing his ritual, lest he is seen, although funeral rituals with the dead are a part of Thai Buddhism.

If the specific body the Ajarn would like to tap has been buried, the Wicha generally dictates that he should wait three nights before going to the grave along with some of his helpers, who will keep watch while the ceremony is performed. On entering the grounds, he must ask the permission of the guardian spirits of the area, and a sizeable offering of rice, eggs, fish, cigarettes and whiskey is made to appease them. One incense stick is lit, and the Ajarn will call the guardian of the cemetery to ask permission to take some Nam Man Prai, stating the name of the person in question. The Ajarn asks that if the guardian does not agree, he must extinguish the incense

and if it goes out, permission is denied and the ceremony must be stopped; otherwise, the guardian spirit would arouse the ghosts of the area to attack.

If he can continue, the Ajarn will then place three small boulders in line at the head of the grave, start to remove the protection spells of the undertaker and cut the ground with his Miit Mhor, prying the earth up in the eight directions 6. Assistants will then dig to the top of the coffin where the Ajarn will remove the nails without opening the lid and put them to one side for later use in other amulets as they carry a tremendous spiritual load. Now the assistants will be told to move back so they cannot see what happens next so as not be a distraction, which can affect the focus of the Ajarn. At this is the point, the Ajarn is in danger because he now has to deal with the power of the smell of the corpse as the lid opens, which can induce vomiting or cause fainting that makes him lose focus. The ghost will also often rise from the coffin with a scream in an attempt to distract the Ajarn to give it the freedom to attack him. All thoughts must be blocked except for the chanting of the magical spells, and he makes invocations until the ghost surrenders. Now he can cut the Sai Sin blessed thread that binds the wrists, and announces his intention to collect Nam Man Prai to the spirit of the body. If the ghost agrees it will notify him mentally the region from which he can obtain the oil. He uses the flame of the beeswax candle to encourage the oil to flow, be it yellow slime or body fat 7, and it should be collected using a ceramic bowl. In most cases, only around ten drops of the oil will be extracted, which will then be mixed with sacred oils, and boiled with coconut oil in his Samnak, during which further kata have to be recited.

Once all this has been achieved, the oil is taken to the shrine room of a Wat for further empowerment under the direct gaze of the principal Buddha image in that room. The Ajarn does this by following the eyes of the statue, placing the oil in that spot, and he chants kata for empowerment. The same process is repeated in a total of 7 temples before the empowerment is considered complete. Those ten drops of pure oil (the number varies between lineages), when mixed with everything else makes the usual Nam Man Prai quite distilled. If this oil is then used as the Prai element in amulets, it will be diluted further to make up just a few percents of the total volume, and it is still strong enough to do its job. With some famous makers, they sell the pure ten drops in a tiny phial direct to eager customers, and the value is exceptional, around \$3,000 for the best. These ten drops are worn as a single amulet, but the power is crazy strong.

Modern Nam Man Prai

People have written to express their unhappiness about the fact that they have spent thousands of dollars on Nam Man Prai to either receive nothing or what seemed to amount to cooking oil and a bit of soil. This Prai oil is of such interest to many that they will risk much of their hard earned money to be able to get a bottle, and many have been disappointed.

The price of Nam Man Prai varies as much as its perceived effects, and

it does not need to cost any more than \$100, even from the best makers. When from a lesser known maker from the more impoverished regions, they are even cheaper although an expert on these oils reported that the cheaper oils seem a little 'wild' ⁸. The main difference between these and a Nam Man Prai from a top maker is considered to be the refinement of the ghost and its directed power. Advice from a trusted seller on which of these oils should be acquired is essential, and do not spend too much, it is not necessary.

Recently, the helper of a very famous Ajarn said that she would not touch his latest NMP as it made her arm go dead, and she felt woozy or like going into a trance; this was with just touching the bottle. Even the Ajarns do not touch this oil; such is its potency. It is recommended that Nam Man Prai does not get on the skin and it is best to use a brush or a dropper when applying it to whatever chosen purpose. Take great care with this product.

See Pung

A See Pung is a balm that is applied to the face (for attraction) or hands (usually when calling for wealth) for magical effect, and it is like wearing an amulet on your skin. Depending on the maker, a small amount is either applied to the eyebrows, in the hair or on the lips and they can either be Prai or non-Prai in nature. The non-Prai varieties are an expression of the skills of the maker in the use of Maha Saneah herbs, and oil extracts. They are also often beautifully scented in a unique but distinctly Thai Buddhist manner. None of these items has been tested in the way of a Western product, but as yet there have been no side effects that can be recalled (maybe they all died?). Evidence of their usage is lost to history, but they are mentioned in the legend of Khun Chang Khun Paen from 400 years ago ⁹.

'An enchanted beeswax applied to his lips to enhance the impact of his words on the listener.'

Some makers specialise in strong See Pung Prai, which adds the power of Prai materials to something applied to the face or hands. These balms are sometimes full of either small pieces of bone (or even huge chunks), corpse hair or even teeth, which makes the application a challenge to most devotees. These items can be powerful, and the residue of bones and the figure of the deity or spirit invoked will then act as a personal fetish or bucha on an altar, still of use, once the balm has finished.

1. Barend Jan Derweil - *Monks and Magic* p138.

2. Justin Thomas McDaniel - *The Lovelorn Ghost and The Magical Monk* p173.

3. An interview with Ajarn Chalerm, September 2015.

4. Ajarn Chalerm October 2015.

5. Suksit Magazine January 2016

6. An interview with a famous Ajarn who would prefer to remain anonymous.

7. Barend Jan Derweil - *Monks and Magic* p138

8. An interview with a collector of Nam Man Prai.

9. C Baker *Khun Chang Khun Paen* p74

Nam Man Prai - An interview with Ajarn Nahn Ting

Nam Man Prai is made by extracting oil from the corpse of a woman that preferably died while giving birth, and it is considered more potent if that person died on a Saturday. Corpse oil taken from a man is not usually used, even if he died a tragic death because it is not considered powerful enough. Using a male source for Nam Man Prai does not follow the tradition of the Saiyasart practices of the Lanna region. Each Ajarn has a different procedure in the making of this oil, and only Ajarns who are from the same lineage may use the same spell, but this is not always the case as it depends on the experience of the maker in question. This Wicha is part of many lineages, and all have differences, but the ancient nature of the kata is generally the same.

To make Nam Man Prai an Ajarn has to bind the ghost of the person the oil is taken from into the oil itself, and spells have to be cast to make the spirit obeys the wishes of the maker. It is essential to request permission to extract the oil before beginning to work with the corpse and sometimes, there is a strong spirit that won't give consent. Some spells can be cast to help get permission, enchanted food can be offered, and there are spells to calm them down. Spirits are like the living in that they need to be persuaded before asking for something in return. If the ghost eventually agrees, the effect of the Nam Man Prai will be more significant than if too much force is used in this process.

The Nam Man Prai from each region of Thailand as well as from Burma and Cambodia are all different, which has led to contradictions in the information on Nam Man Prai. In Ajarn Ting's experience, the inconsistencies relate to specific types of oil and the makers in question; there is no 'one way'. In the method Ajarn Ting uses it is essential to use Horasart to know the best day to extract the oil, to know which date is the best for the traits of Saneah, Metta or business. Nam Man Prai is usually sourced at night to avoid being seen by others, and the correct date to do so depends on the day the person died or sometimes, the day on which they were buried. If extracting corpse oil from a lady who died while pregnant, the baby needs to be removed from the corpse first, following which, Ajarn needs to chant a spell to ask for permission from the spirit to continue. If permission is not given the ritual must be stopped, and everyone goes home as permission is essential. This aspect corresponds to the making of a Luk Krok where if both the mother and father freely give the corpse, it will make an incredible Luk Krok!

Ajarn Ting's Nam Man Prai is a mixture of both corpse oil and Wahn, specific magical plants that enhance the effectiveness of the oil, and to make it more appealing he often adds perfume. One of the most popular Wahn plants is Wahn Kai Dang (Red Chicken), which enhances the power of Metta Maha Niyom (popularity), and the oil from this plant has excellent kama sutra qualities. The various Wahn in the Nam Man Prai must be ground into a powder to be put in as a mixture, and because the oils extracted from a



264. Ajarn Ting making his Nam Man Prai.
 The upper two photographs are of the blessing in the graveyard and the lower one, the blessing in the Samnak. For each place, the photos of Phor Sala Tan were present as he taught Ajarn the Wicha.





265. Ajarn Apichai making the Nam Man Prai from many sources in his Samnak.

corpse have a strong smell, it is essential to cover that stench in some way.

The Nam Man Prai Ajarn produces has to be praised and receive an offering of food before every use, and through this action, the user can make a deal with the spirit to make it work. People often use the oil for success in business or with matters of love, and it is very effective with those wishes, but in the opinion of Ajarn Ting, it should never be used for making a Sak Yant as it is best not ingest or touch Nam Man Prai. Touching Nam Man Prai or putting it into the bloodstream can harm the user when they are at their weakest as the ghost can eat at your life force, or even possess. It is for carrying around only, to help with Saneah and Metta, success in making deals or trading at business. Ajarn stresses the point that the rules state that it is just for carrying around, devotees should not put on themselves or anyone else because this action lets the ghost in, and they can be difficult to remove once inside.

Some people do apply the oil to their skin, and that is up to them but they only need to apply the smallest drop to be effective and using a toothpick is the way Ajarn recommends. The amount involved does not matter with Nam Man Prai as tiny amounts work just the same as a full bottle. If the bottle becomes empty or very low, it is OK to top it up with a pure oil (sesame oil or olive oil is excellent), and it will work just the same until the essence of the Nam Man Prai has been depleted. At that point, it is best to dispose of the bottle into running water while telling the spirit that it is time to pass. Let it go with your mind while reciting kata.

Nam Man Prai - an interview with Ajarn Apichai

In this interview, Ajarn Apichai discussed the making of two different Nam Man Prai that he had produced, the first being one with a single spirit, which came from a named corpse, Mae Pinn Thip.

Ajarn Apichai's single ghost Nam Man Prai is from a person who became a Phi Tai Tang Glom ghost. This single source type of oil is scarce and is regarded as 'Hian', meaning very wild and powerful; highly desired by lovers, and those who involved in trading and selling. Ajarn kept this oil for many years, working on satisfying the spirit before finally making it into a good charm, into which he Wahn plants, the thread that bound Mae Pinn Thip's hands as a corpse, and a Takrut that held a specific spell.

This second oil is one that contains Nam Man Prai from 9 different sources (all Phi Tai Hong). Added to these oils were 9 coffin nails that had been used with Phi Tai Hong spirits, graveyard soils from 9 different sources, the ashes from 9 Phi Tai Hong, Nam Man Luk Krok, and 108 types of Wahn. It contains a Takrut called Maleng Wan Kham (The Golden Fly), which is an old Lanna spell that brings luck and increased attraction towards sex. The Takrut was written on the private area of a female body, and rolled at an auspicious time. Adding this makes this Nam Man Prai superb for business sales and workers in the red light districts, with the offerings being raw pork, raw eggs, one incense stick, and alcohol.

When Ajarn Apichai makes a mixture of many different supernatural herbs, various items and Prai materials from many bodies, he has to first perform two ceremonies - Ban Sakul Pen and Ban Sakul Tai. These ceremonies are related to some of the practices for the dead here in Thailand as well as sometimes for the living. If someone who is being plagued by a troublesome spirit, often sent by a dark magician to cause harm, an Ajarn can use a shroud from a corpse, and perform Ban Sakul Tai on the person, effectively making them 'dead' as Bang Sakul Tai is to help a spirit pass on. Ajarn would then follow the Bang Sakul Tai ritual with the Bang Sakul Pen ceremony to 'bring them back to life' as it is a ritual to reconstruct a life form. The idea of this ceremony is to fool the troublesome entity into believing that the person has died, allowing them to escape the curse but it is risky as a lot of spirits around will also consider that you are dead, and try to grasp on to the living body.

Ajarn Apichai repeated this information because it is important. The Bang Sukun Tai ceremony is for the spirit of the dead to persuade them to move on to the next realm. It is a funerary practice where a shroud is placed over the body to help the spirit to understand that they have passed away and the mind of the Ajarn will then help them let go of the earthly realm. The Bang Sakul Pen ritual is to create a new body from what is available. *(This was the first time the author encountered this knowledge and it became influential in the structure of other interviews)*

It is essential to consider the correct date and time to collect any bone or soil from the graveyard, and again when adding these materials to the mix in question. The best days revolves typically around the full and dark moon days. Permission will also be needed from the guardian spirits of the graveyard, and if that is not granted, an Ajarn will have to try another day.

There are many types of Nam Man Prai, and they are similar, like a Benz and BMW. It all depends on the correct timing, correct method, and the power of the mind of the maker. He can make NMP from one ghost or many ghosts, be they male or female, but the mixture has to be correct, and the Wicha must be followed precisely. The amount of ghosts in the Nam Man Prai is not relevant as Ajarn Apichai is going to make a new spirit body within the mixture. The Nam Man Prai Maleng Wan Kham contains a base mix from many materials, and many ghosts from people that died in different ways, even including Nam Man Luk Krok, which boosts the power of the supernatural nature of this oil. There is no difference between a mixture of many ghosts than there is when mixing many magical plants, what is important is to follow the correct Wicha, the correct Pruk Saek and make it on the best day and time. The process of making it is more important than the Pruk Saek; the right date and time of creation, and the correct mixture is paramount.

All the types of Nam Man Prai effectively fall into the two examples above, two categories. The first is to collect the oil from one body, which allows the Pruk Saek to go directly into the oil to bind the spirit well, because there is

little interference from anything else present in the oil. The second way is to use the oil from many bodies and mix them with Wahn plants, and anything else that will help the power of the Nam Man Prai. With there being so many different spirits in the oil it is necessary to then perform the ritual Ban Sakul Tai to all the bodies, and spirits within the mixture, in effect, blessing the dead and helping them move on. In this case, the Pruk Saek involves the making of a new entity, one new spirit, which is created by the Ajarn, and he does not use any of the old spirits present in the mixture.

Using a Nam Man Prai by Ajarn Apichai

Here Ajarn explains how to use Nam Man Prai on others for love and sex.

When using his Nam Man Prai, the devotee can praise it to ask the resident spirit to help with what is desired, like luck or good fortune or they can use Nam Man Prai on others for love and sex. Ajarn strongly recommends that a person should not use his Nam Man Prai on themselves as it may invite the ghost into their body. To use it on others, the spirit in the oil will need an offering first. If using the Nam Man Prai to make someone love them, the devotee needs the name of the object person, and to make offerings of alcohol, pork, cigarettes and an incense stick. They then need to tell the spirit in the Nam Man Prai that they would like this person, say the name while holding their image in mind, and ask the Nam Prai to connect to that person's spirit. Perform this focussed action until the incense stick is burnt out before going to see the desired person, and put some Nam Man Prai on them in a way that the oil does not get onto the devotee's skin. They should not touch the Nam Man Prai, or the spirit can eat them up little by little, and ghosts that have been eating people are very difficult to remove. After using Nam Man Prai, they will need to wash their hands because they might have touched it by accident and it is also prudent to have a regular spiritual bath using Sompoi to cleanse away any spiritually unwanted magical residues.

Nam Man Prai - an interview with Ajarn Khaw

Many years ago, when Ajarn made Nam Man Prai, he must source the oil from the corpse of a pregnant lady. Some Ajarns used a candle flame under the chin to get the oil, some Ajarns cut the fat on the stomach, and used the flame there, which had definite advantages because the stomach produces much more of the corpse oil than under the chin. Depending on the traditions of each region of Thailand, pregnant ladies who died in terrible circumstances were buried, allowing access for the Ajarn and sometimes, the family had no money, just leaving the corpse in the charnel grounds. At that time there was no news on TV, no cameras, no facebook, no telephones, nothing, so the Ajarns then could do anything they wanted. As Thailand becomes more modernised, getting access to a suitable corpse has become very difficult. Now they cremate everyone, and strict regulations are in place as to who can get access to the body.

The real Nam Man Prai from the correct source can still be found but not only is it hard to source, there is also the chance that the Ajarn can get into

big trouble. The current circumstances make real Nam Man Prai very expensive, and how does the buyer know that it is from the correct source and made in the proper way? Now, many Ajarns use bone to make a version of Nam Man Prai by adding various Wahn oils in a pan with the bone, and boiling them together. People ask which type is more powerful, and of course, the real Nam Man Prai is more strong, but as time passes, Ajarn Khaw expects all Nam Man Prai will be made from bone rather than in the original way. If the Ajarn can get any part of the body from a person that has died a Prai Death it can be used, which is why you now get Nam Man Prai from blood, and the source can be either from a pregnant lady or people who die in a violent accident (Phi Tai Hong). The Phi Tai Tang Glom is more powerful, but a Phi Tai Hong is a strong enough source for most people's needs.

Nowadays, there are Nam Man Prai advertised as being for gay men, gay ladies, night workers etc. and Ajarn himself made a gay oil from the bones of a gay man, which was very popular. He always tells devotees that this is not pure Nam Man Prai, it is made from boiling bones, and the correct herbal oils. A new form of Nam Man Prai is now advertised as 59 dead body Nam Man Prai, and this is also from bone. Ajarn also sees mixtures of Prai materials like coffin nails, hair, flesh and even brains being used to make modern Nam Man Prai. Ajarn Khaw used to have a great collection of bones to use in his works, but a few years ago the Police went to see many Ajarns to check what they had, so they had to either hide them or dispose of them in a suitable way.

The Wicha for corpse oil is strong, but the Ajarn must have power over the spirit, and most of all, he must protect himself. He does not know the spirit involved, whether it is from a good person or an evil one, and however it is, an Ajarn has to have the ability to control it. Every time an Ajarn makes a spirit amulet, he has to protect himself all the time. He needs to pray to the Buddha, and pray to our Masters every night because many Ajarns die because of their works. There was a recent example in Chiang Mai when an Ajarn committed suicide because he worked with a particular spirit too much. A monk then took that spirit into his care, bringing it to his temple and later, he died too! He was a famous, good monk but they both came across a deadly spirit, and there was nothing they could do.

With the pure Nam Man Prai, people would touch some onto the skin of someone they liked, and then they would fall in love with them. This is not good because Nam Man Prai is black magic and the object person may become crazy or die. It is all very negative, and no one benefits from that in the end. Ajarn often gets asked by some Chinese people for pure Nam Man Prai, but they do not know how strong it is, and they are not an Ajarn, so they do not know how to control it. The spirit of a dead pregnant lady is angry and will attack people, so now Ajarn Khaw's Nam Man Prai is softer, not pure Nam Man Prai. If he is selling Nam Man Prai to people, as an Ajarn, he has to be sure that they can use it without problems, so Ajarn asks people if they are used to Prai talismans, and if not, he won't sell to them. They can use Ajarn's oil on their own body to actively attract others, which is much

stronger than any herbal oil. And as far as caring for it goes, there is no need to feed it because, as with all of these corpse oils, please Tamboon often and dedicate the merit to the spirit in the oil. That is enough.

If you are interested in Nam Man Prai, ask the Master who made it how to use it and take care of it because there are many kinds of this oil, and some will bring bad things to life.

266. Cooking Ghost Oil.





267. Maybe Ajarn Apichai will put a little Yaa Faet on you?
Turn you into his sex slave.....

Yaa Faet - an interview with Ajarn Apichai

The Yaa Faet is a legendary substance that is used to control people and make them into sexual slaves, but is rarely seen in anything other than the Cambodian style powder.

There are many different Wicha for making a Yaa Faet. The Wicha for the Esaan versions is from Cambodia, but the Central regions have a version of this powder, and there is also a Lanna Wicha for Yaa Faet. The Cambodian version is low magic (in this Ajarn means a darker magic), but in the Lanna region they use Wahn, although not the same Wahn that are used in amulet making. One ingredient is called Maa Krua Baa, which is a plant that is meant to drive people crazy with lust, the Dok Rak, a rare flower for love, and many rare Saneah plants from the Lanna area.

Yaa Faet is a powder and Ajarn Apichai's most recent Khun Paen amulet was made purely of Yaa Faet, because of its qualities of attraction. To do this, the Yaa Faet was mixed with the more common plants for amulet making, Wahn Dok Thong, Wahn Galong, and then moulded into shape and a Takrut added. In the story of Khun Paen, he is always making magical powders to place in the food of others to control them or bind them to him, and Ajarn believes that these were various recipes for Yaa Faet.

There are two types of Yaa Faet, the first one is a Yaa Faet made from Wahn and the second one is the Cambodian version, into which a devotee will mix skin from various parts of their body to bind a person to them in different ways. The Khmer version does not necessarily make the person love the user but it will influence them to do what the devotee wants them to do, and in many ways it is like they are drugged. The Lanna versions contain Wahn that makes a person fall in love with the devotee, and as this version does not include Prai it can be put into food.

Ajarn also mixes his Yaa Faet with wax to make it into a See Pung (and here Ajarn pulled out his brass container of the balm, which he was careful not to let me touch), that can be put onto someone's skin as well as be consumed. Ajarn Apichai considers that his Yaa Faet is better than a Nam Man Prai because that can be dangerous due to the ghost, and Ajarn believes the Saneah element in his Yaa Faet is higher than in his corpse oil. There is another type of Yaa Faet called Yaa Sang, which is like a curse potion that can make a person die or go crazy. Both kinds of Yaa powder follow an ancient Wicha that may even date back before any Buddhist influences came to this region, originating from the Mhor Phi.

Yaa Faet - an interview with Ajarn Suea

In the Lanna system of magic, Yaa Faet is called Yaa Oy, and it is used to force another person to fall in love with the person using it by putting it into their food or drink. It is not only to make a person fall in love, but it is to make a person obey, meaning it is forceful magic. In the past, recipes of Yaa

Faet were used by a war general, or a King and Yaa Faet would be mixed into the food of the army to make them obey. It is also used to feed dogs, elephants and horses to ensure their sublimation too but each of these uses would call for a slightly different formula.

The Yaa Faet is mixed into food that is not too hot or too cold to ensure its full effect, but it has to be combined with the dead skin from the body. If a man is using this Yaa Faet, he uses the skin rubbed off his balls, and if it is a lady, she mixes it with the white discharge that comes before their period. For each application, a piece of Yaa Faet the size of a match-head is used, and the additive should be around three times that volume.

Ajarn Suea's Yaa Faet also contains bone powder, which makes it Prai but its inclusion ensures its dynamic nature even though the amount of bone is small. There is another form of Yaa Faet that does not contain Prai, which helps the object person fall in love with the user physically and mentally. This one has Prai, and it is only used to force a person to be under the control of the user physically, although they may not love them mentally.

268. The Lanna Yaa Faet by Ajarn Suea.





269. **Two ritual instruments.**
THE SUN Miit Mhor from Luang Phor Pina and a Maai Kru for inscribing Takrut.



270. The Maai Kru of Ajarn Apichai.

Ritual Instruments

There are very few ritual instruments used in The Thai Occult, and most of them are made by Ajarn's themselves or passed along lineages. The most common would be the Miit Mhor, and the Mitt Mhor of Ajarn Nahn Ting is discussed on page 146.

The Miit Mhor is usually used for breaking magical bonds, or any of the obstructions that get in the way of a magical goal. As with both Luang Phor Pina's (p516) and Ajarn Ting's Miit Mhor, they can also be more practical, acting as protection when cutting open bodies or working with Prai.

Let's now close this work on The Thai Occult with a discussion on the Maai Kru.

The Maai Kru - an interview with Ajarn Apichai

This Maai Kru is a representation of Phra Kaet Kaew Chulamanee, one of the angels in heaven, and a Maai Kru is the medium for connecting the magical power of the heavens and the earth. It has a point at one end, which is like the tip of the Chedi or Stupa, a shape that represents the highest point to the heavens in the old days. A Maai Kru can also be considered to be a weapon from a god because of the power that it taps into..

The Maai Kru is the medium to connect the power of the heavens and to transfer that power into the amulet. It is also used to write the script on the Takrut if it has a point on one end. A Maai Kru can be made from many kinds of wood, Maai Sak, Maai Khayun and the one in the photograph is made from Maai Ngiew Dam. The Maai Ngiew Dam Maai Kru belonging to Ajarn Apichai has no point on the end, so it is for transferring power only, almost akin to a wand.

The Maai Kru is generally passed on from the Master of a Luksit while studying but then once a person becomes an Ajarn, they usually have to construct a Maai Kru for themselves. In the past, the use was restricted to Royal ceremonies and rituals by the Brahmin Priests, but their use spread to the magical practitioners over the centuries.

Some Maai Kru use a point that is an ordinary metal, but Ajarn made his other Maai Kru's point (he has two Maai Kru for different purposes) from a coffin nail as it has a particular charge that he likes. A coffin nail is Athan, and that adds power. This one side is for the writing Yantra onto metal sheets to make Takrut, and the other end is for blessings.

Next will follow an Appendix of photographs that should be seen or have been taken during making of The Thai Occult Book. This is to clear the drawers, folders and files, and move on to the next project.



271. The beautiful Khan Kru of Ajarn Apichai.
The Lanna Khun Paen suits having swords in his Khan Kru for Saneah.



272. The Wicha for some Candle Magic to kill.
 Permission to use this photo was only given after extensive Photoshop alterations.



273. A Master at work in the graveyard. Note the candles are clumped together but when asked for the reason, Ajarn Ting said, 'It's Windy'.



274. Ajarn Ting performing a love binding ritual with the help of ghosts.



275. A portrait of Ajarn Ting in the light of magical candles in a graveyard.



276. A Photograph that came from the rooms of Luang Phor Pina.
Here, resting on an Asian magazine about his works.



277. The tree that is climbed to get out of hell by LP Pina, Wat Sanomlao, Saraburi.



278. Kids who have misbehaved in The Hell Gardens of Wat Mae Kaet Noi.



279. A tray of old Luang Phor Pina items that were sold to support the restoration of his temple, Wat Sanomlao. A mixture of Dao, bones and heavy Prai.



280. A statue of Luang Phor Pina supporting the collapsing roof of his old temple. The floors were made of layers of concrete and bottles of Red Bull, his favourite drink.



281. A very rare and strongly supernatural example of a parasite wood consuming the host. From the collection of Ajarn Suea.



282. The storeroom of Luang Phor Pina's temple, Wat Sanomlao.
That was quite a day!



283. Three original photographs of the body of Luang Phor Pina in a glass case, which would become a prai item due to the decomposing corpse.





284. Below. Figures in the room where they laid out the dead, sitting in judgement.
All made during the time of Luang Phor Pina, Wat Sanomlao.





285. The altar for the Wai Kru day of Ajarn Tui.



286. Which started with Ajarn calling on the Lersi to bless the day.



287. Ajarn Ting helped train Ajarn Tui and is blessing his student.



288. Then Ajarn Tui helped with the blessings for all the devotees present.



289. Ajarn Suea asked for a Sak Yant from a Kruba Ajarn of Ajarn Tui.



290. Phor Nahn Chalerm Saen By blesses his student, Ajarn Tui.



291. Ever wondered what happens to the rest of the skull after the Panneng have been cut out? Usually, the remaining bone is crushed for the load but sometimes, they make a talisman out of the face. The top is male and the bottom, female.





292. Before the finished book was sent to Timeless Editions, the author received the Yant Kru's from Ajarn Suea to mark him as a close disciple.



293. This Luksit's role is to help Ajarn Suea with rituals, blessings and photos..



294. *This is a ritual to bind lovers back together.*



295. A ghost helps the binding and is paid with offerings that include blood.



296. The figures are then buried in the graveyard.



297. And finally, a supernatural cat for all you supernatural freaks!
Have fun,

Jenx xx

*Please join the blog on facebook - The Thai Occult Books
where you can ask any questions that arise from this work and arrange to visit the
Ajarns in this book.*



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contact@timeless-shop.com

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